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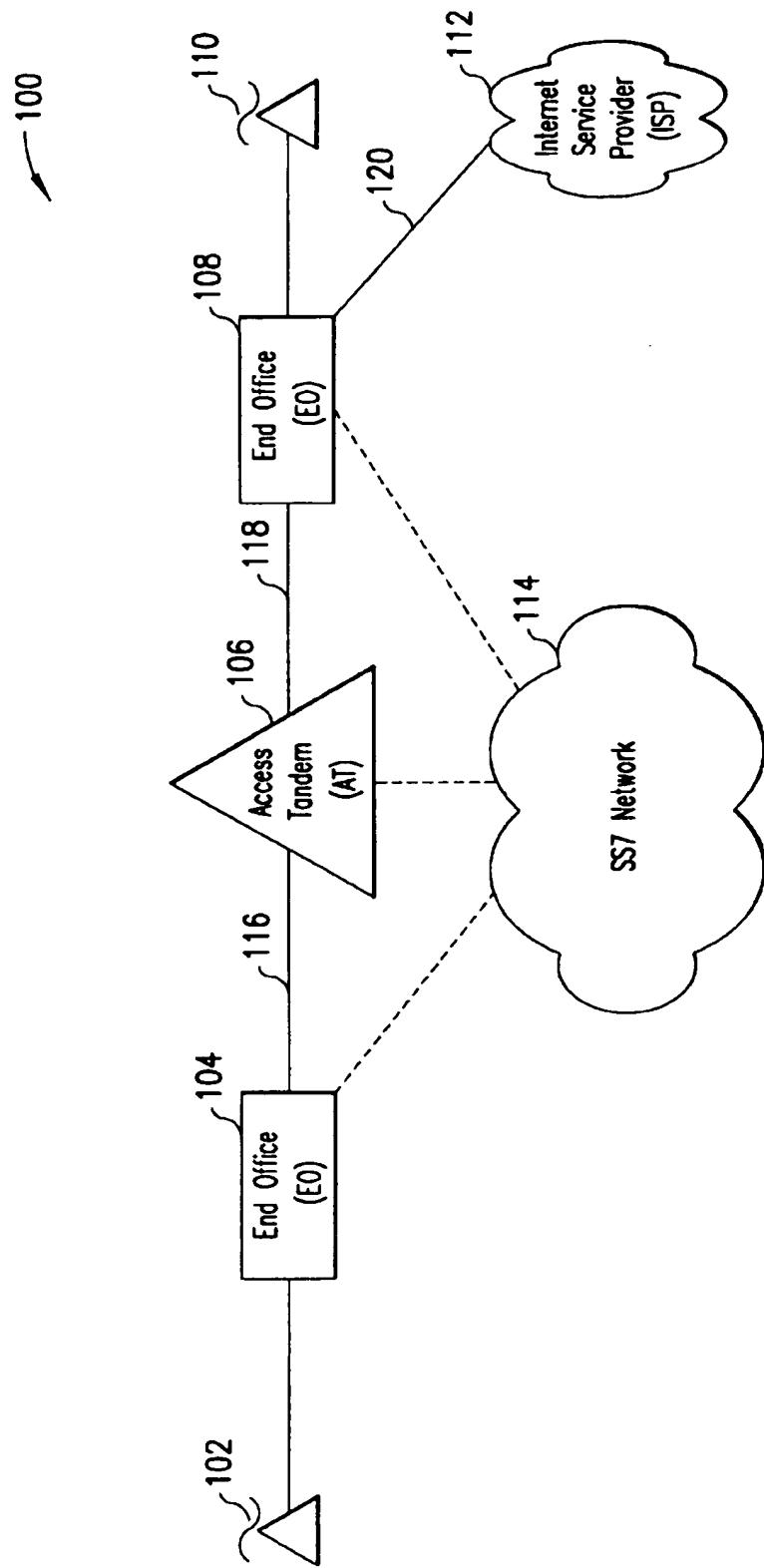


FIG. 1
PRIOR ART

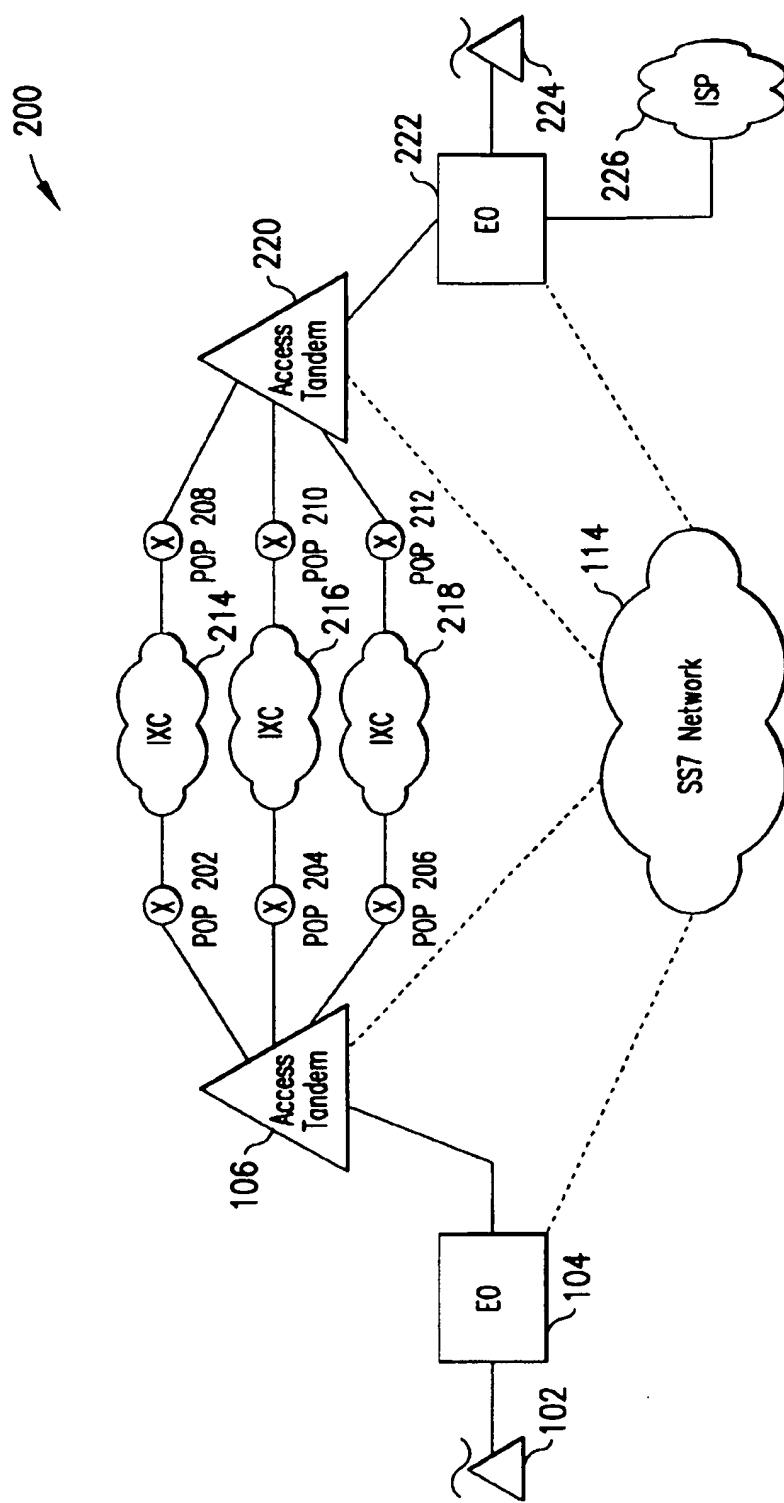


FIG. 2
PRIOR ART

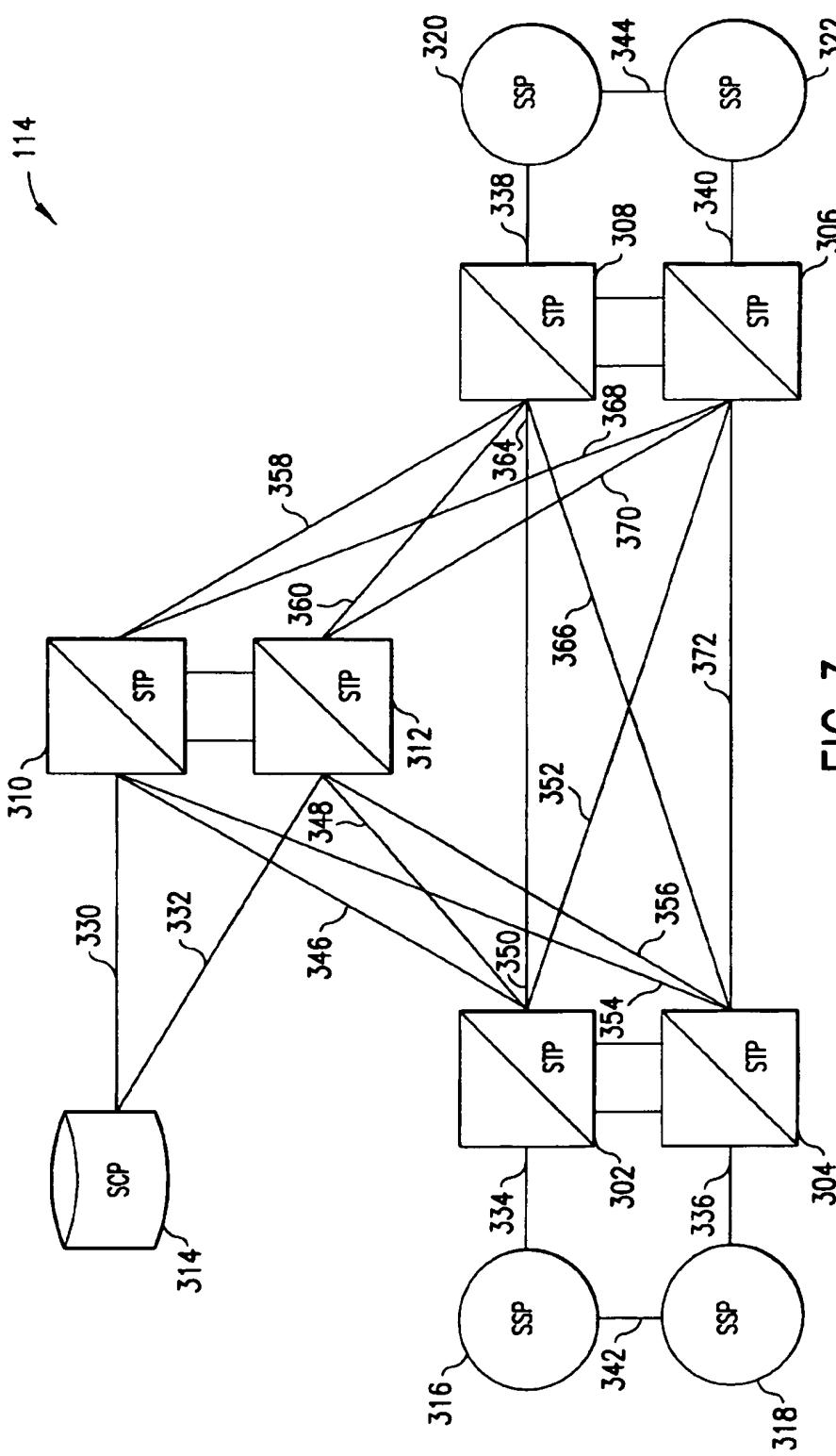


FIG. 3
PRIOR ART

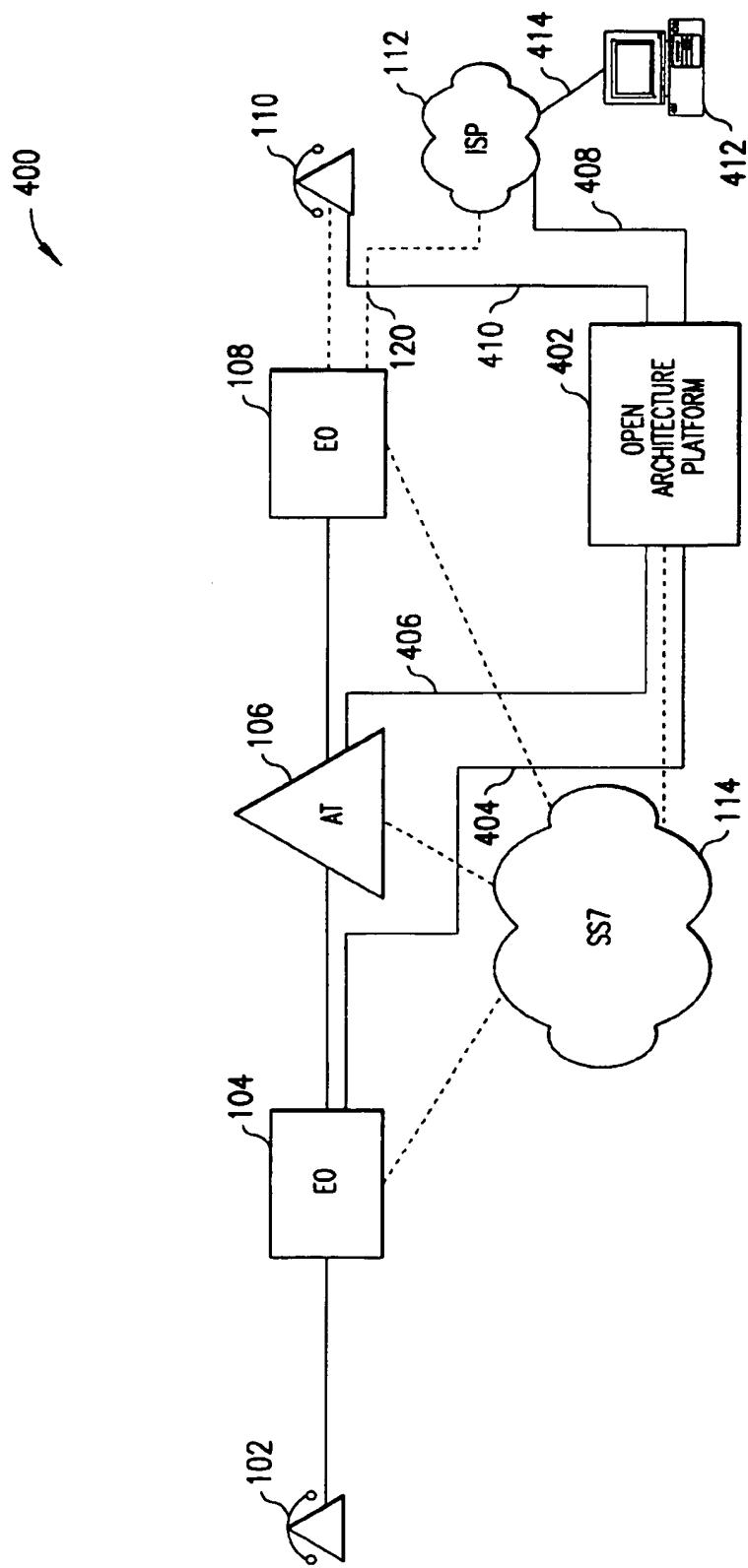


FIG. 4

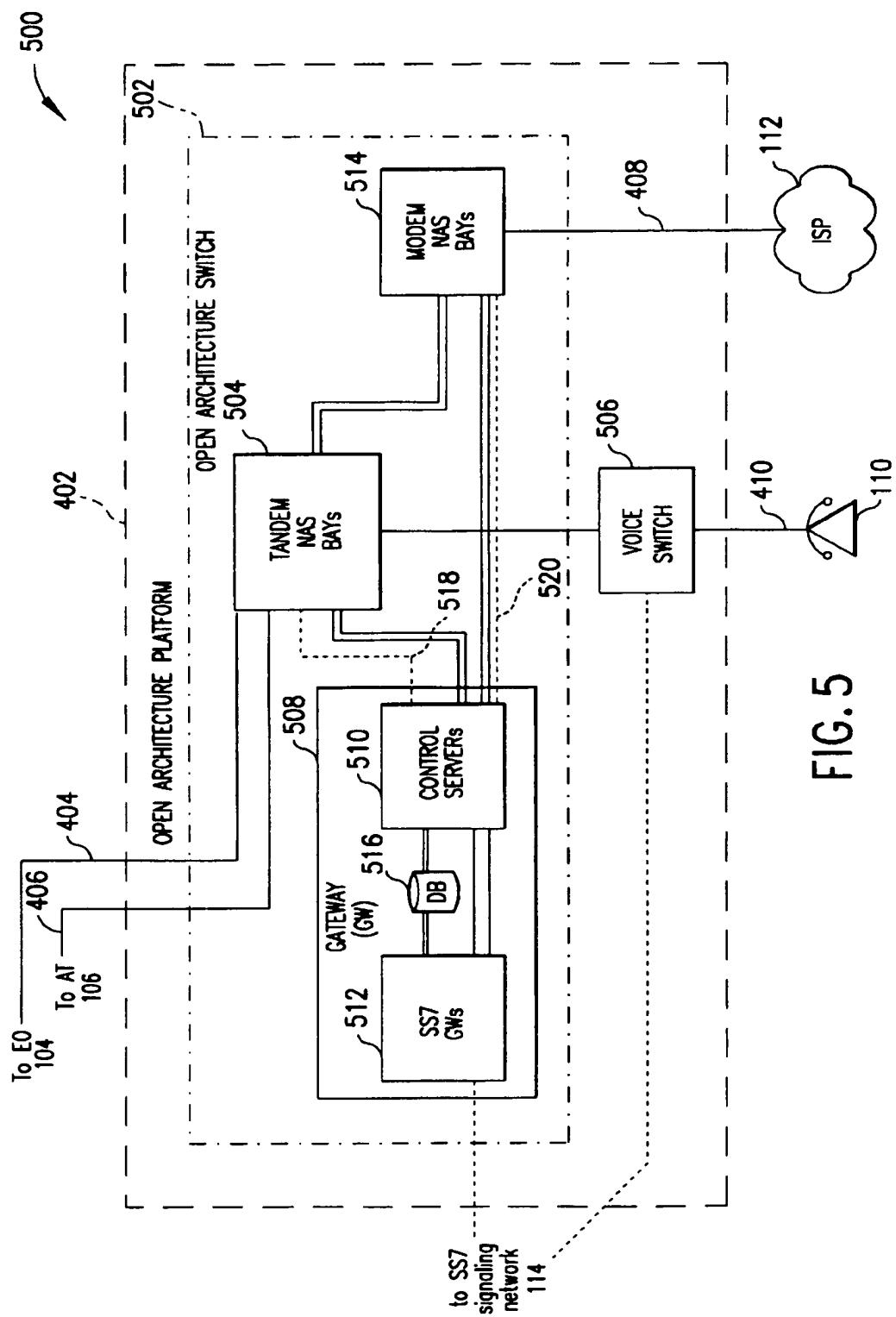


FIG. 5

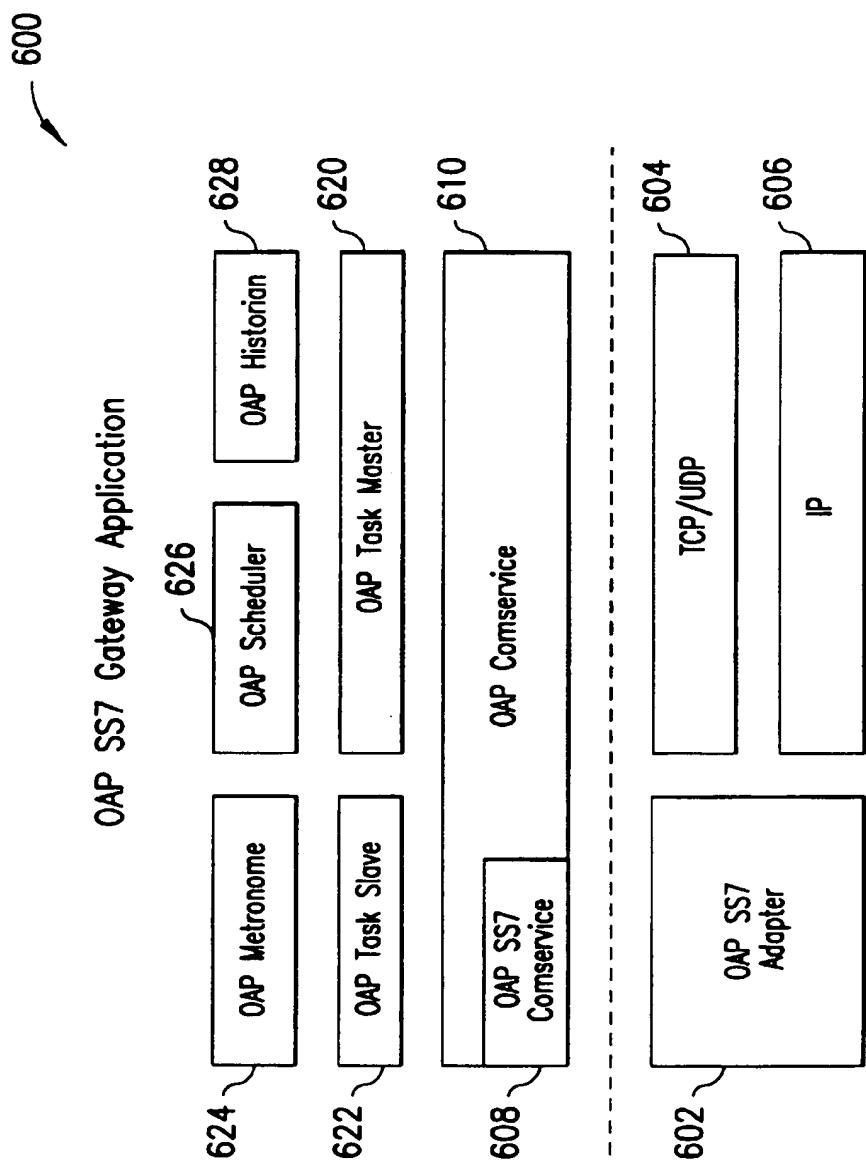


FIG. 6

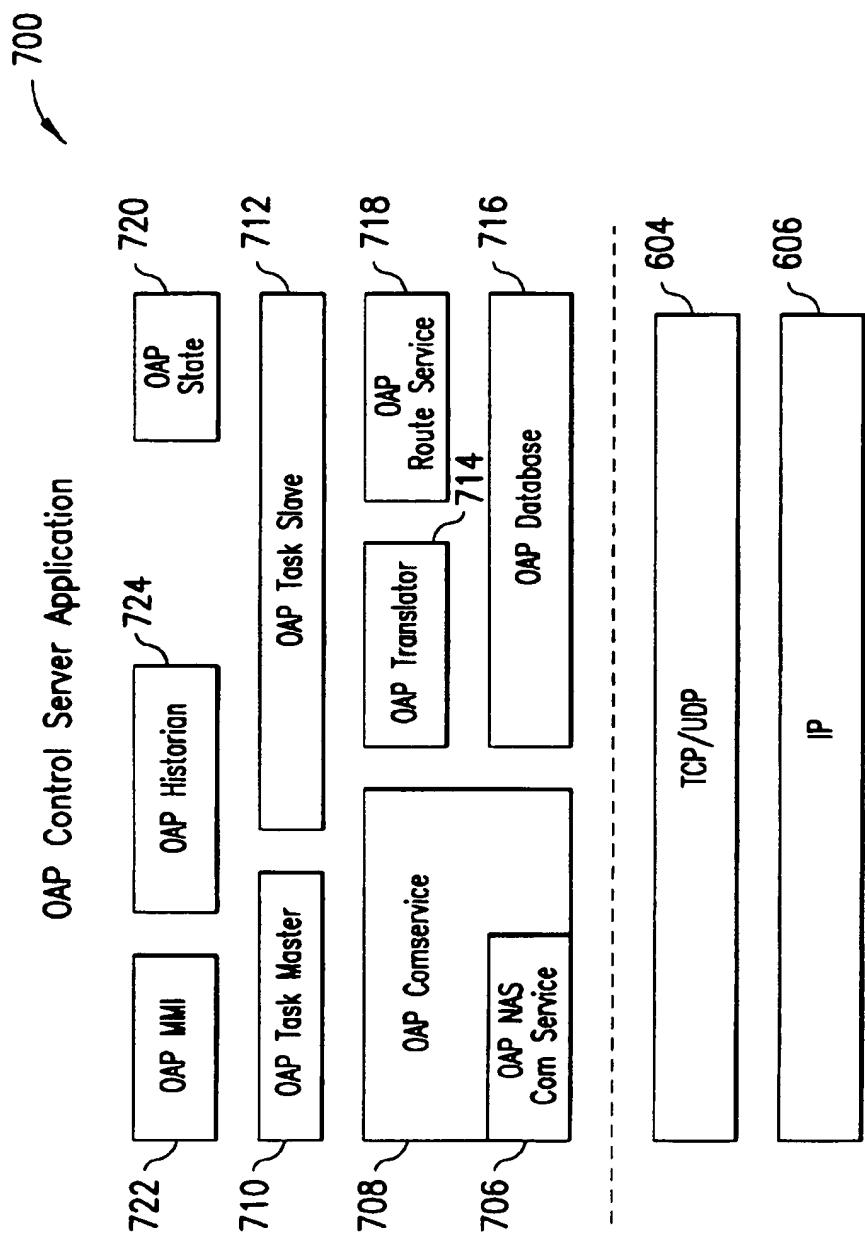


FIG. 7

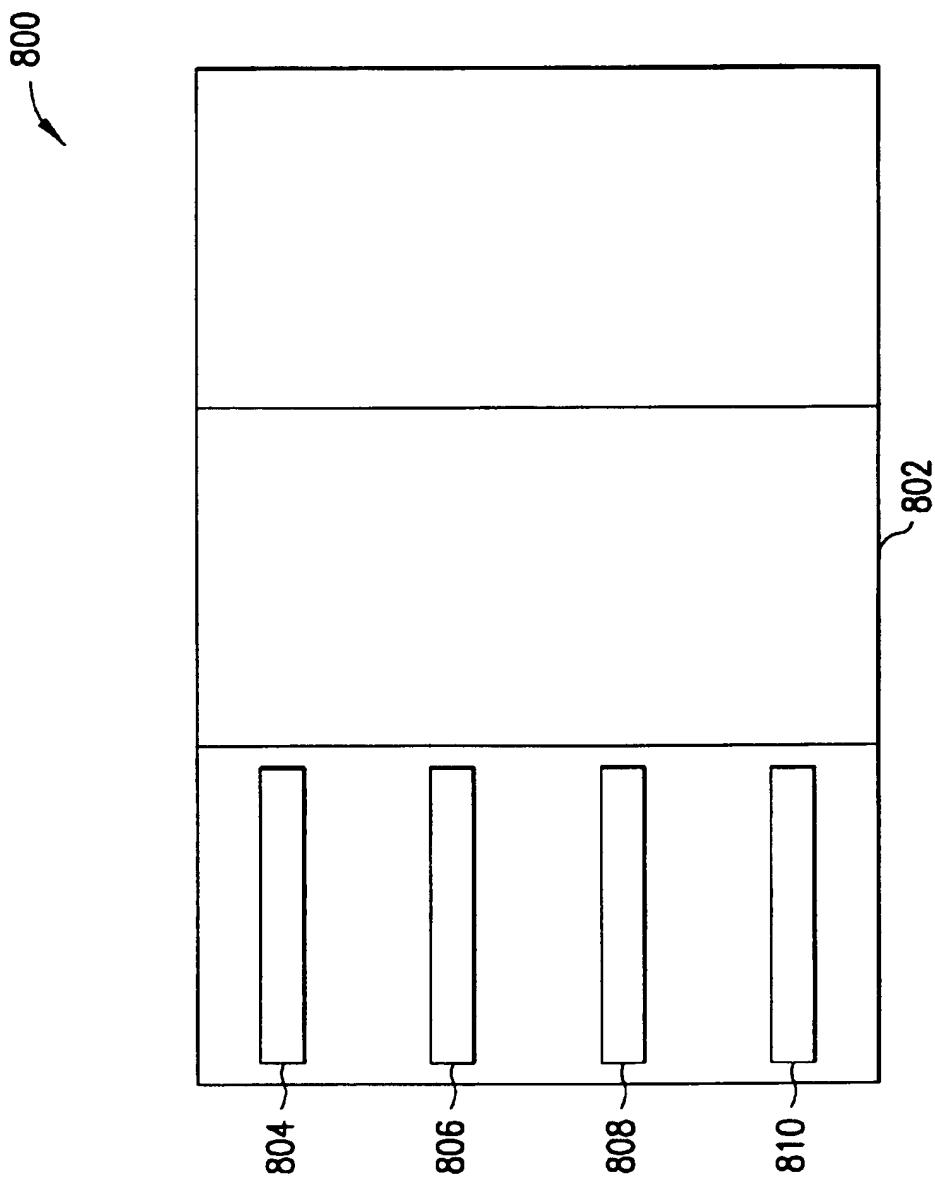
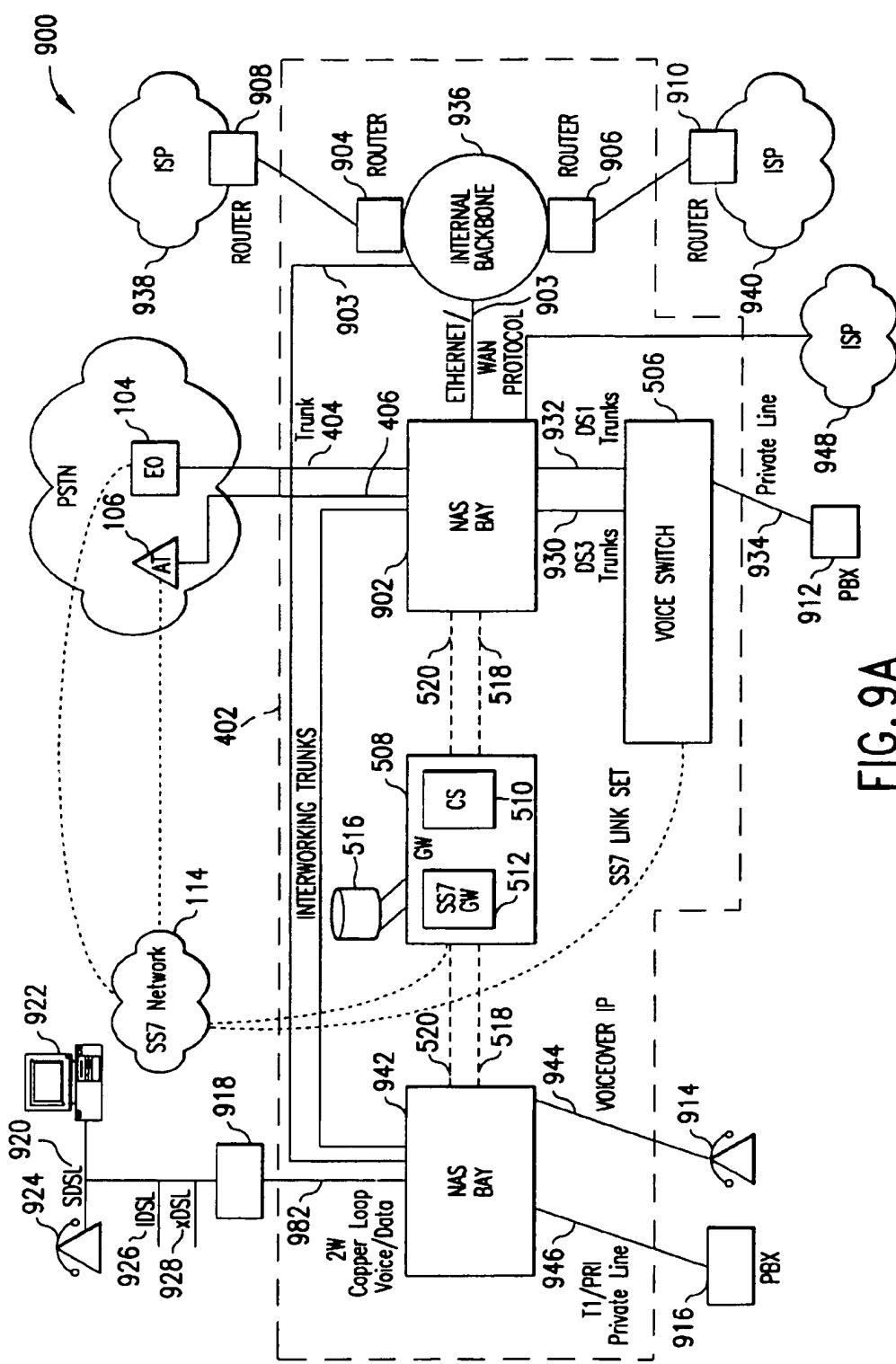
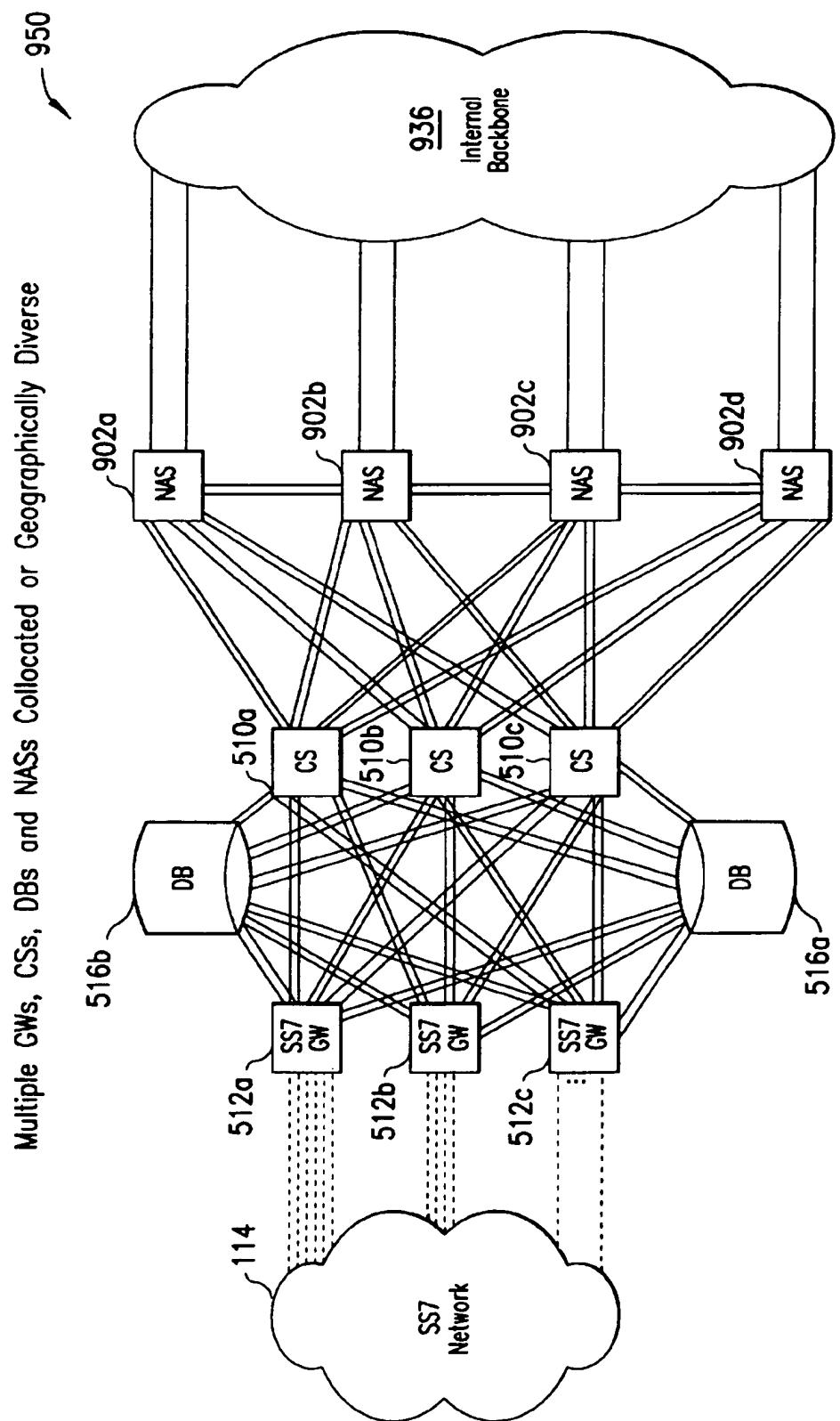


FIG. 8





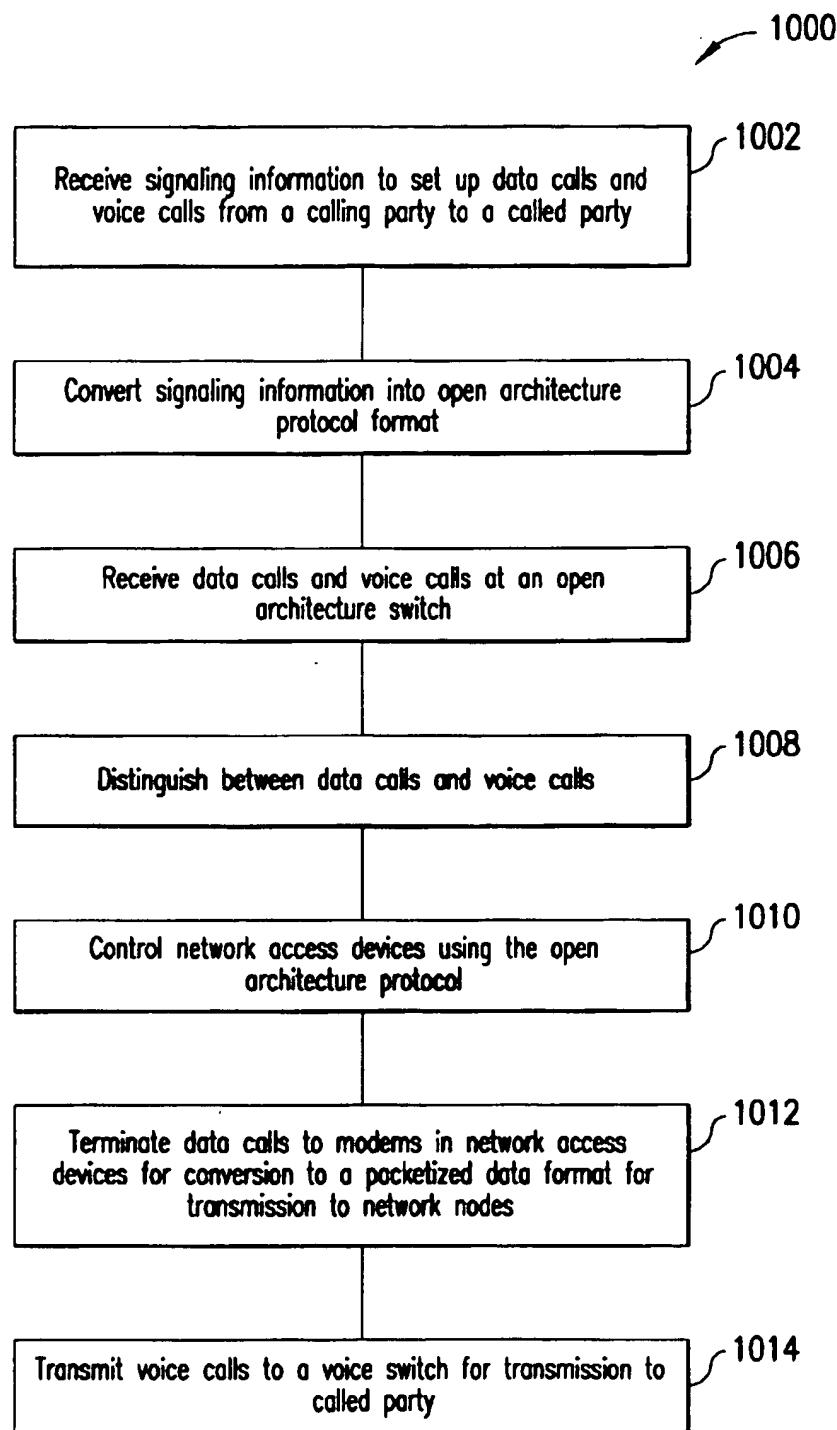


FIG. 10A

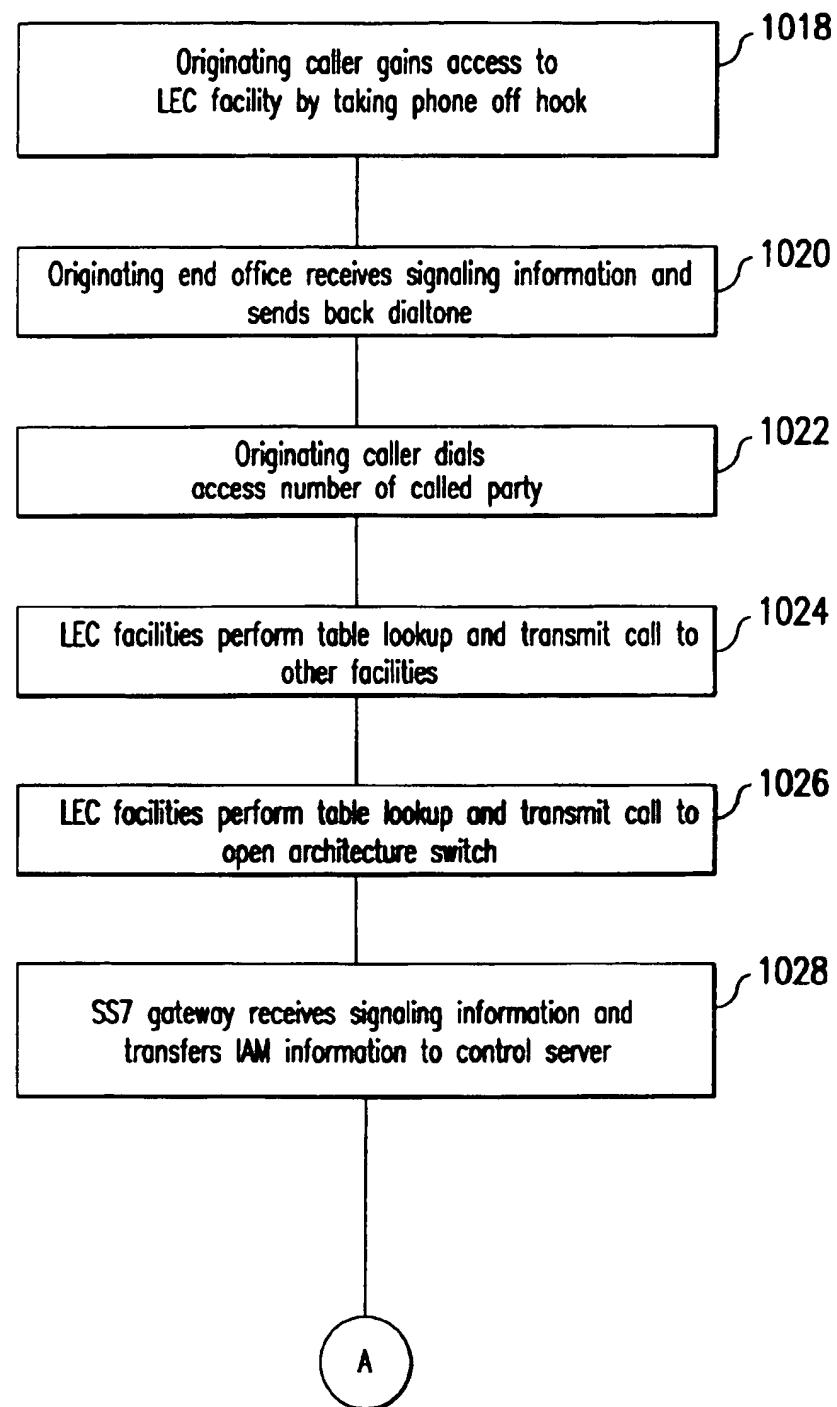


FIG. 10B

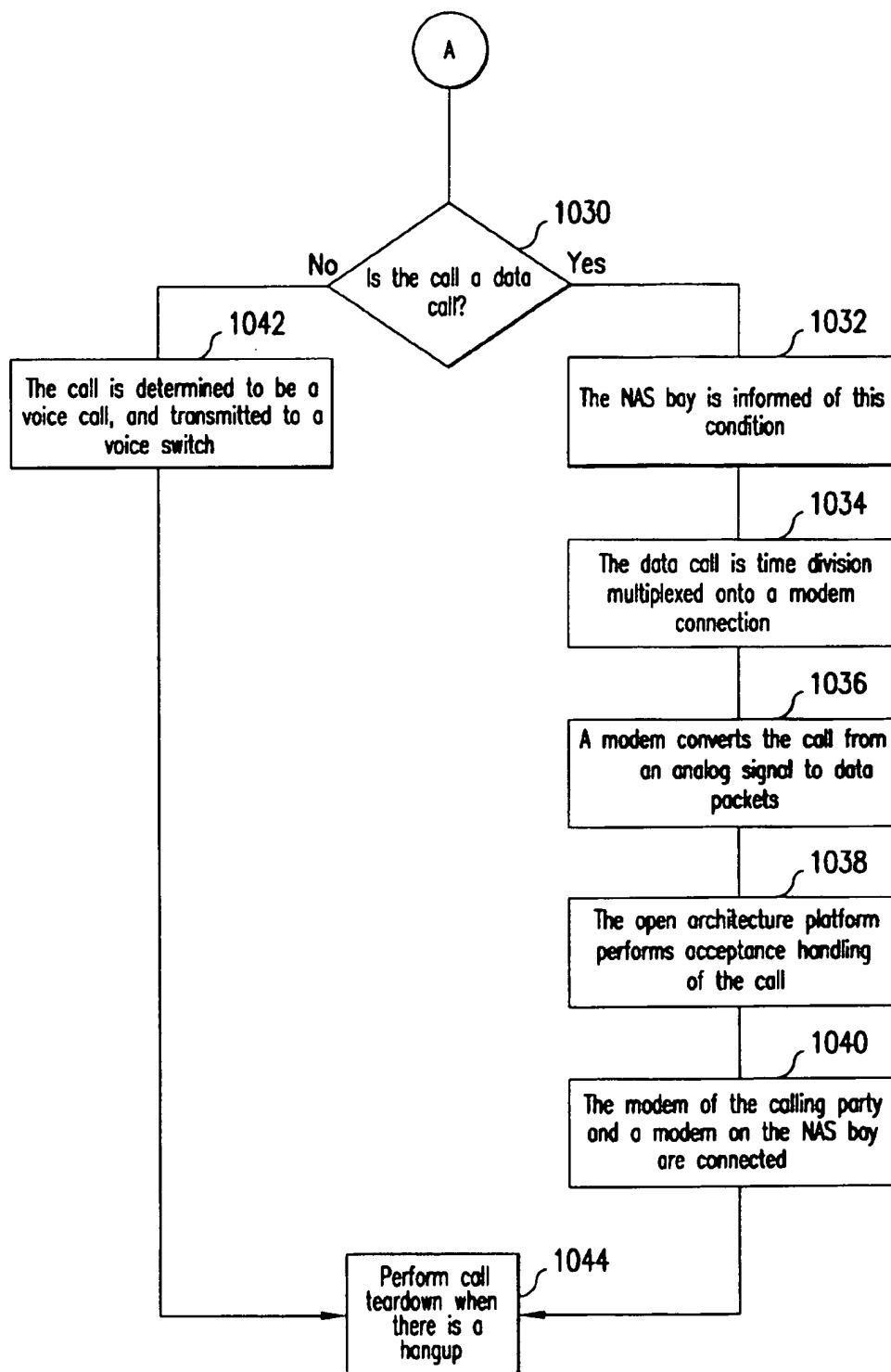


FIG. 10C

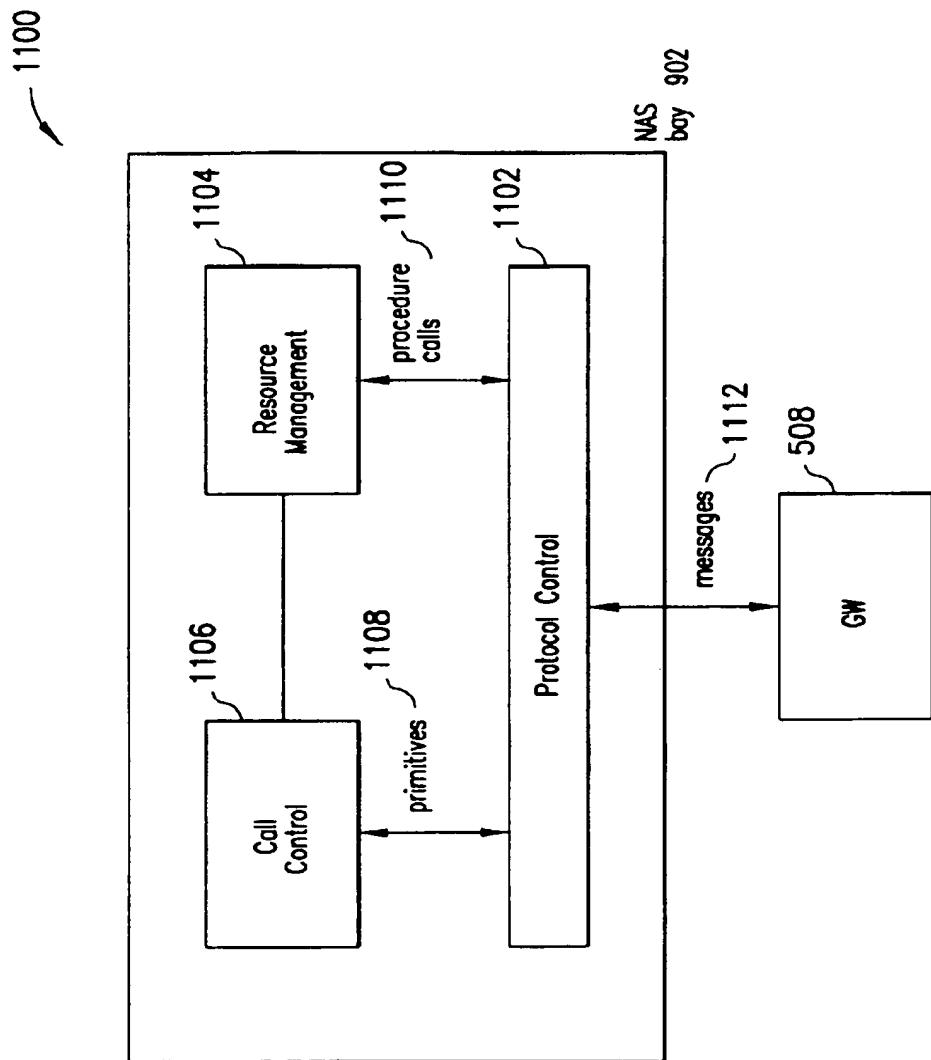


FIG. 11

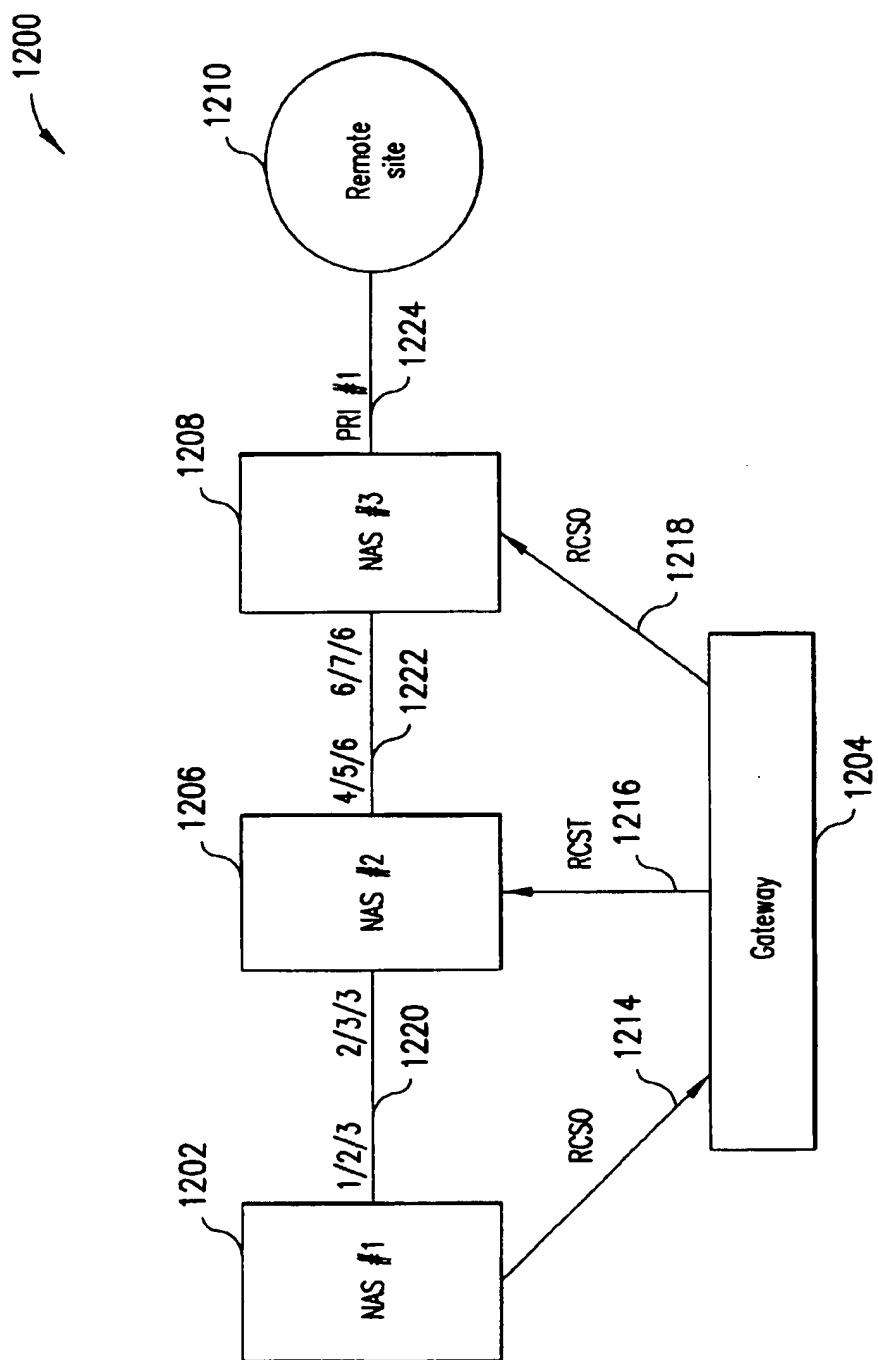
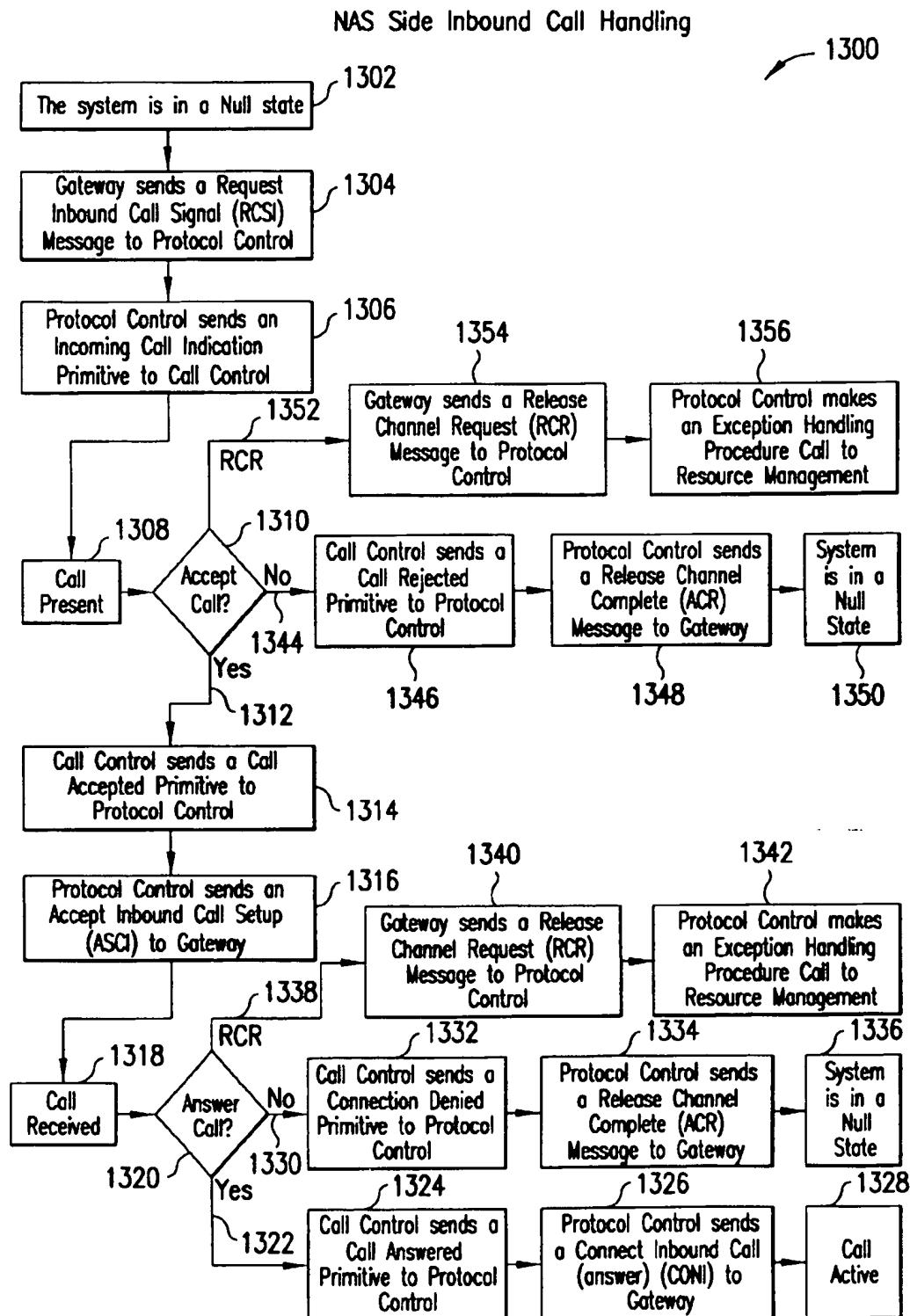


FIG. 12



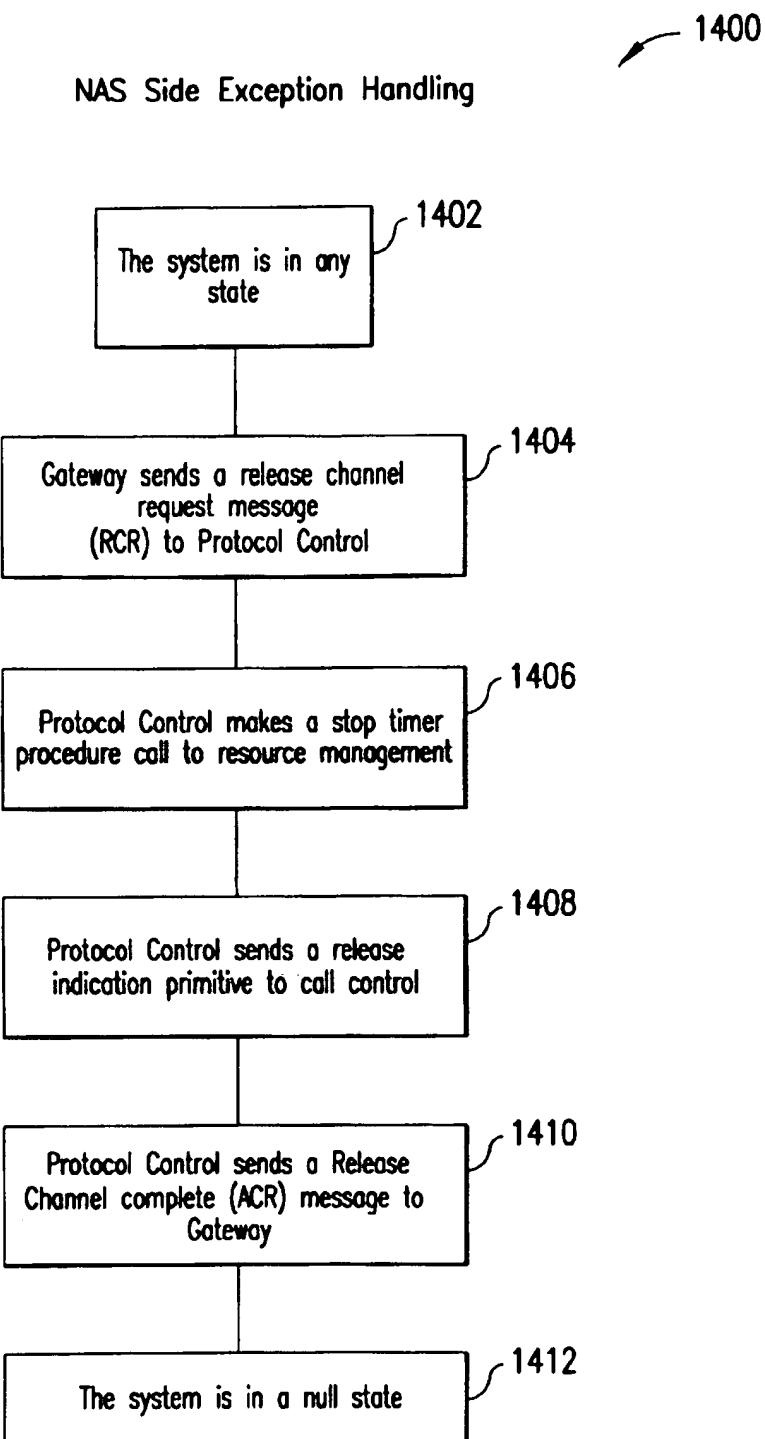


FIG. 14A

1400

NAS Side Exception Handling (cont.)

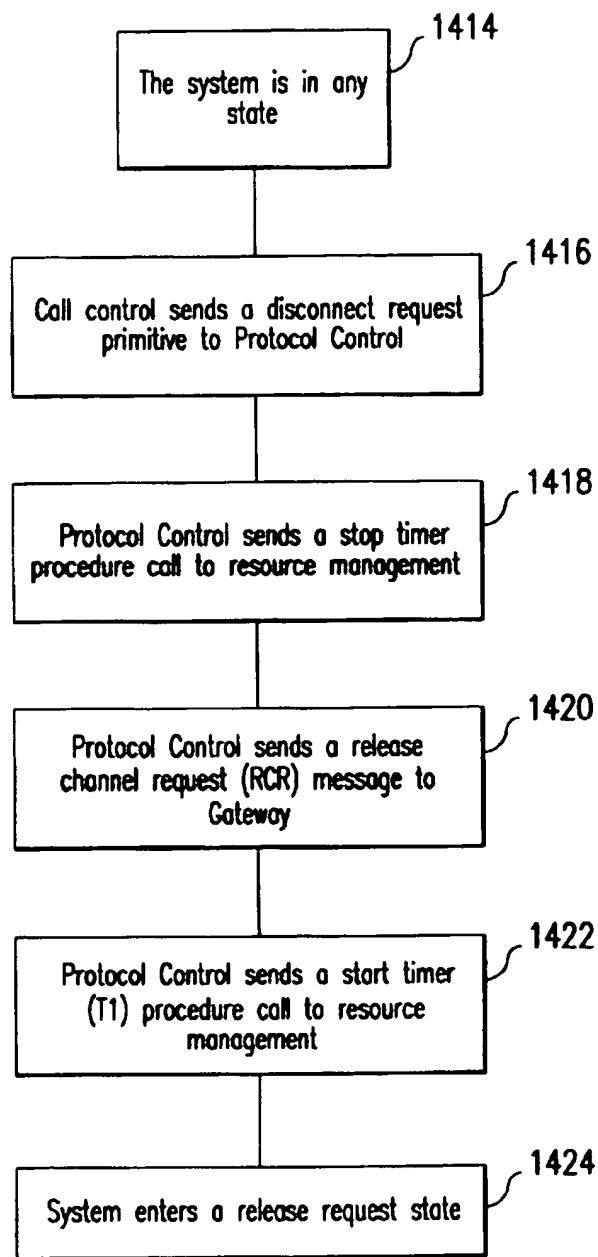


FIG. 14B

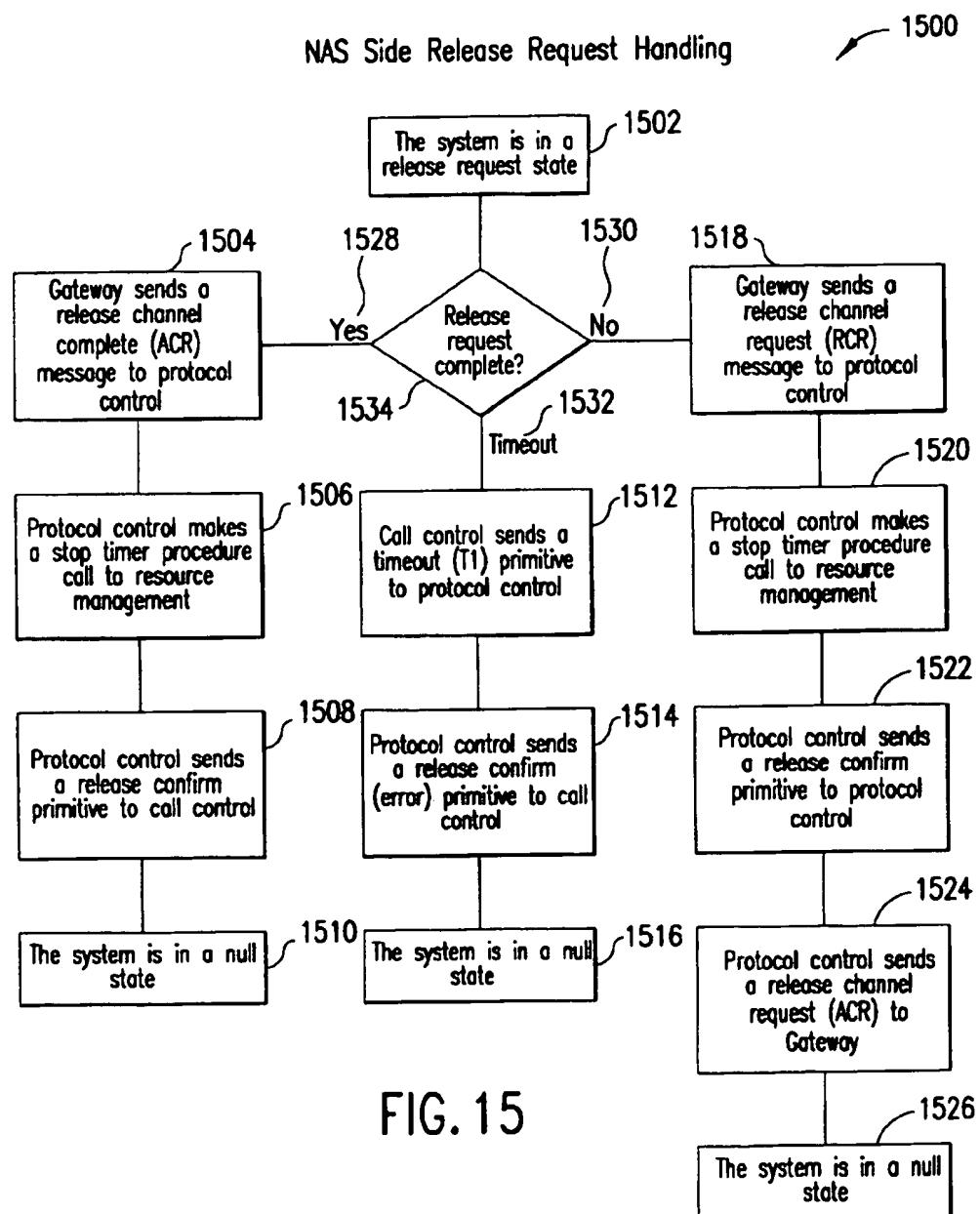


FIG. 15

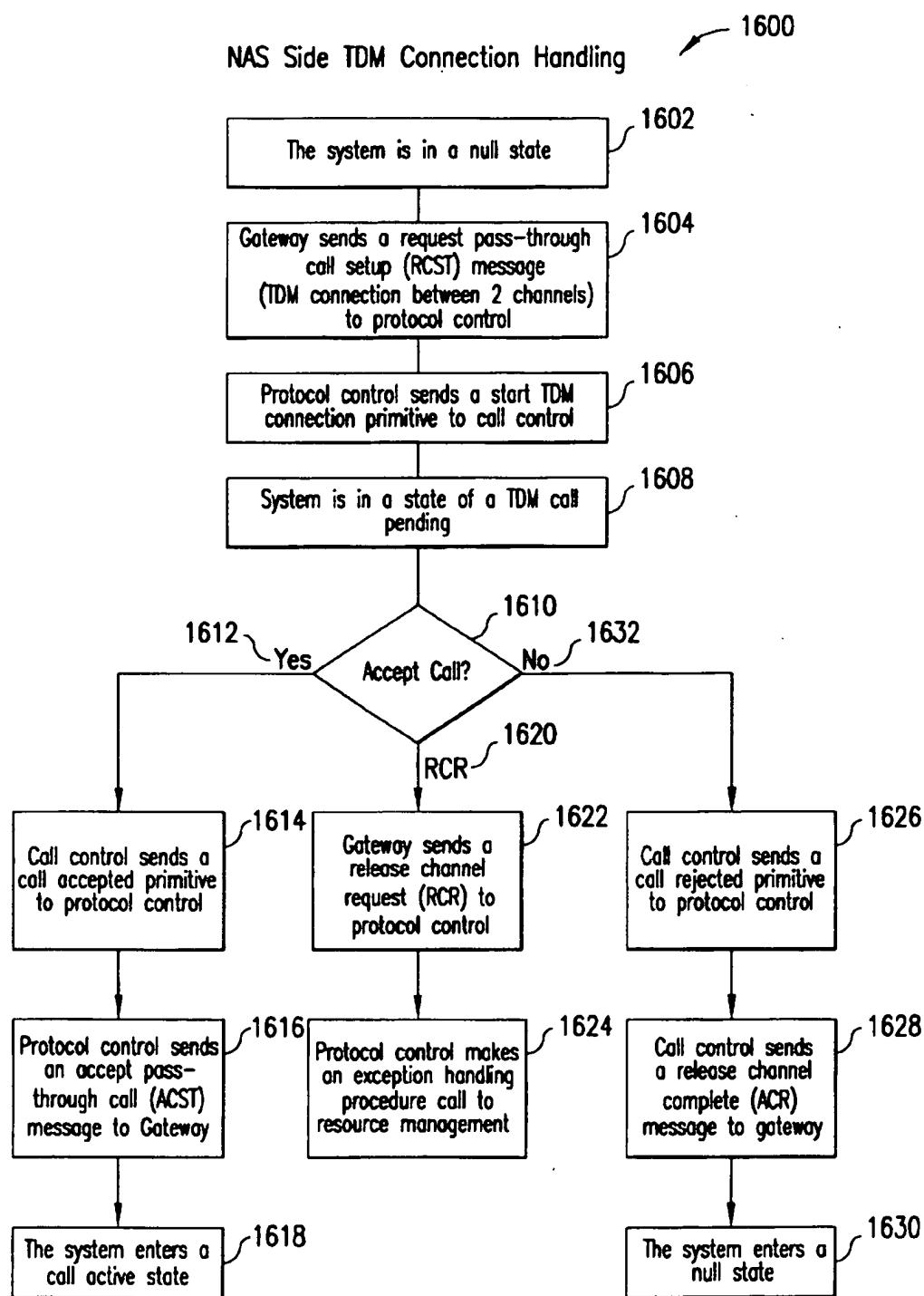


FIG. 16

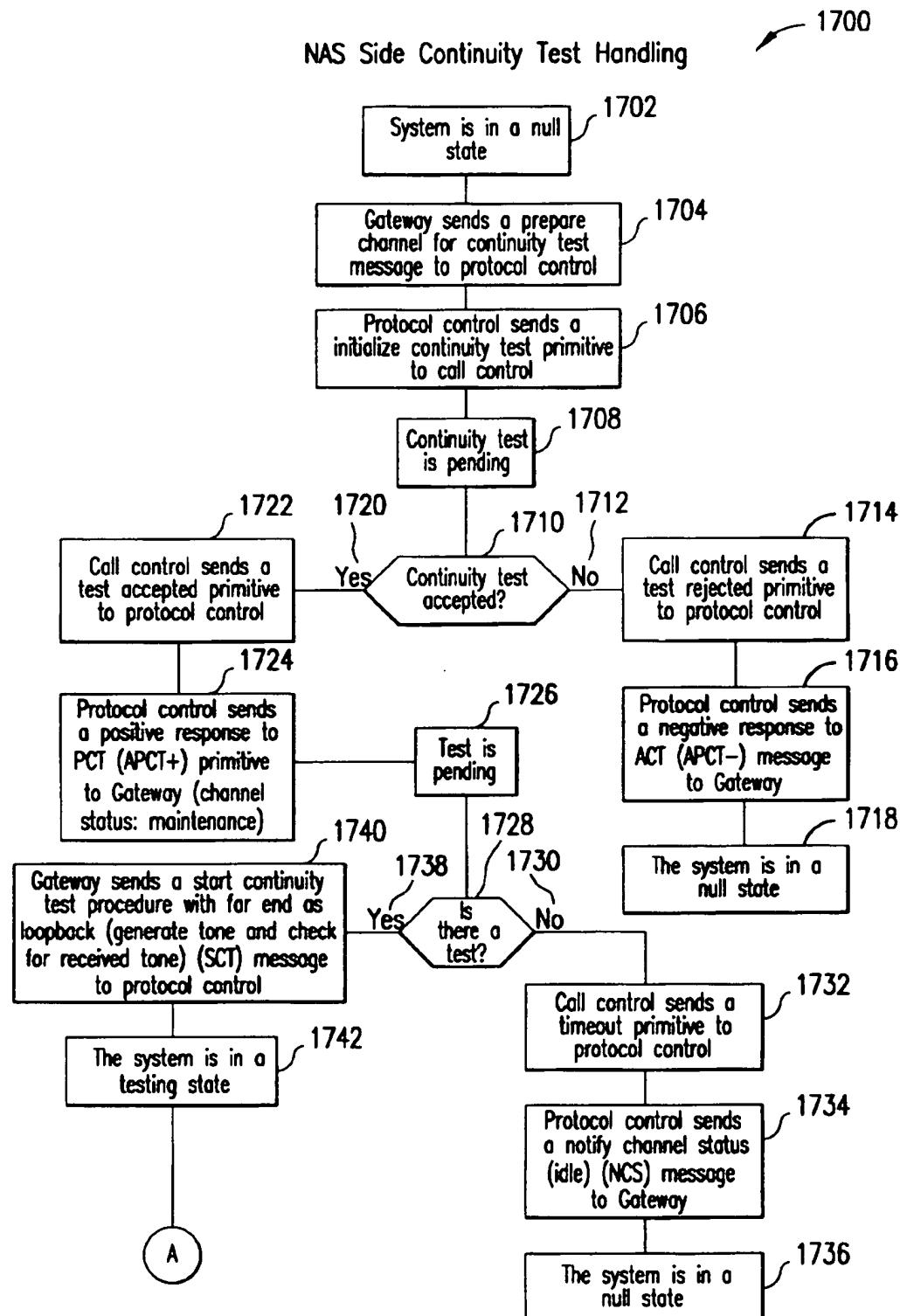


FIG. 17A

NAS Side Continuity Test Handling (cont.)

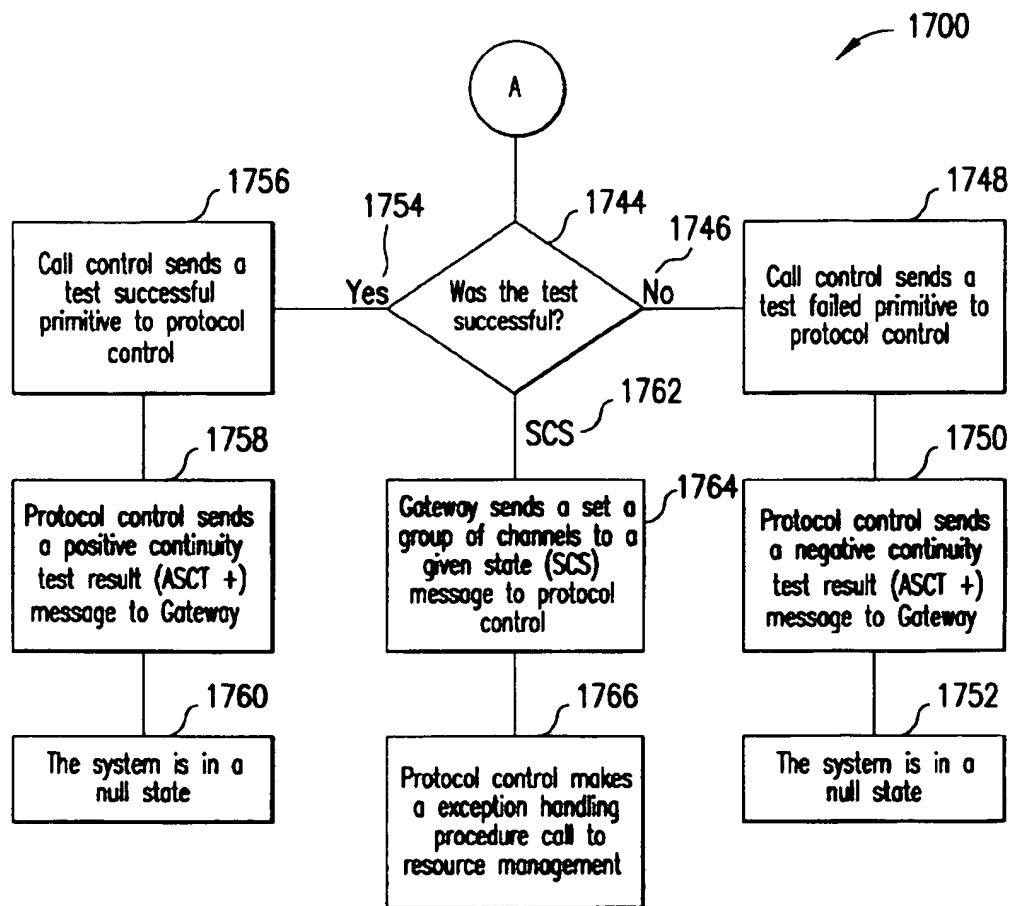


FIG. 17B

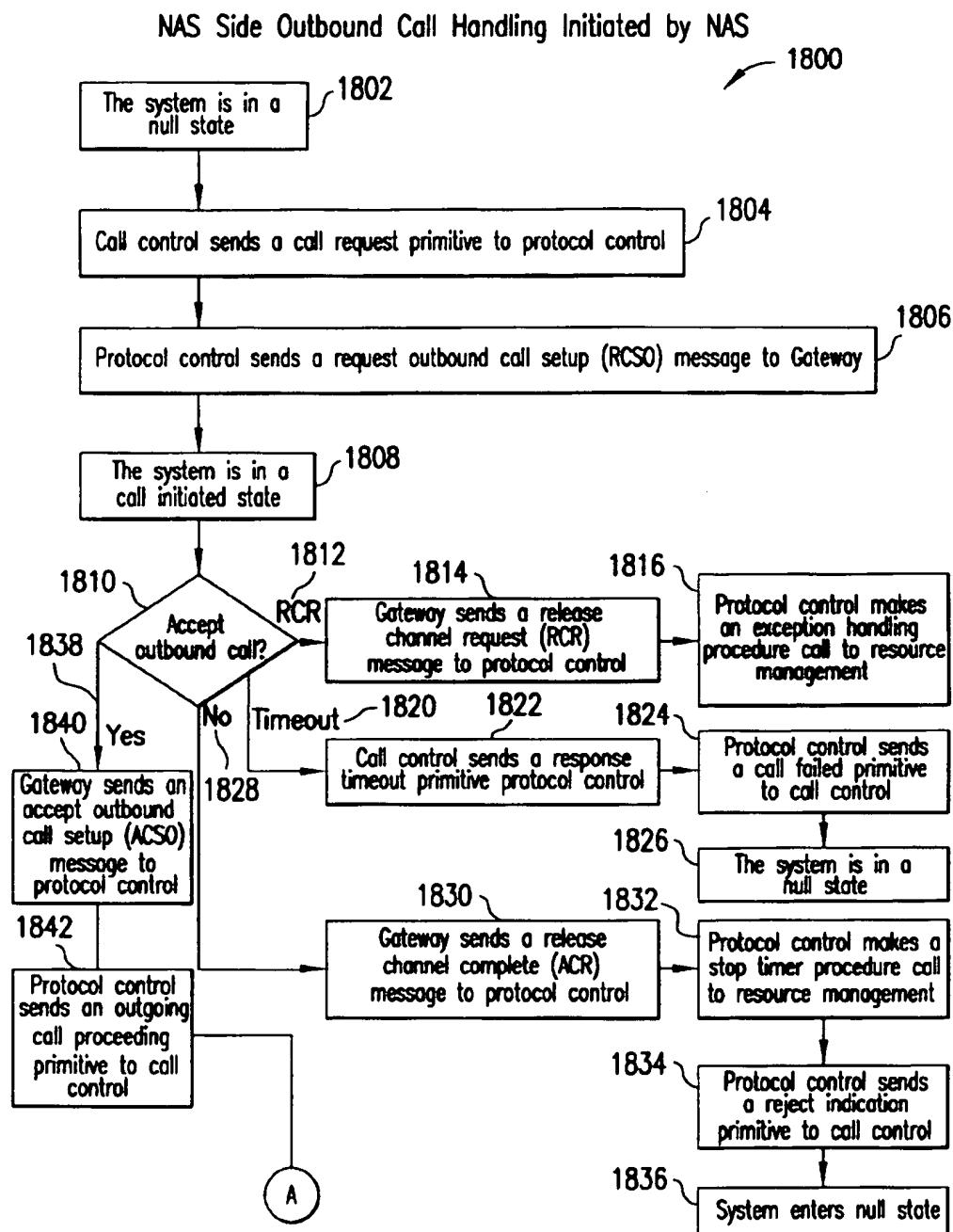


FIG. 18A

NAS Side Outbound Call Handling Initiated by NAS (cont.)

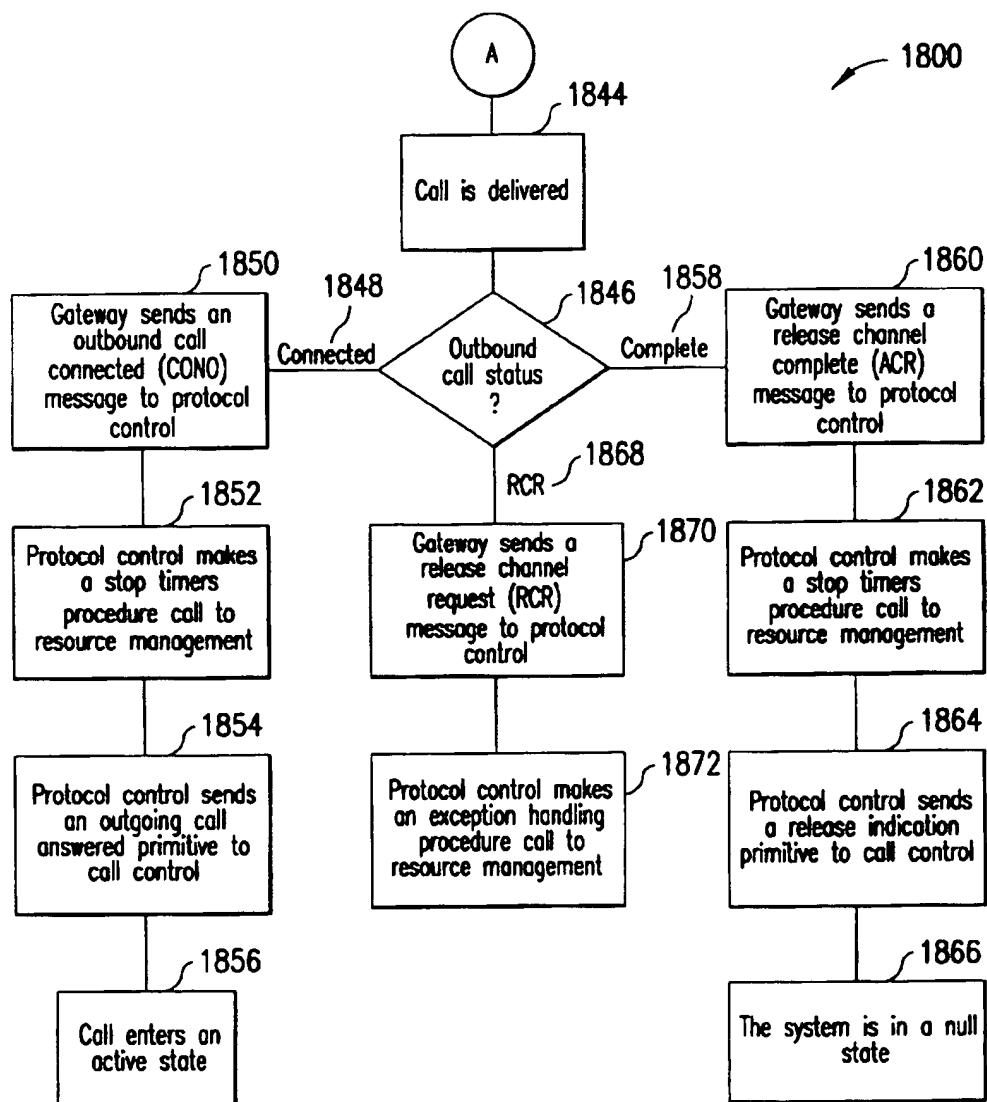


FIG. 18B

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR BYPASSING DATA FROM EGRESS FACILITIES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to telecommunications networks and, more particularly, to a system and method for the signaling, routing and other manipulation of voice and data calls within the public switched telephone network.

2. Related Art

Telecommunication networks were originally designed to connect one device, such as a telephone, to another device using switching services. Circuit-switched networks provide a dedicated, fixed amount of capacity (a "circuit") between two devices for the entire duration of a transmission session.

Originally, a circuit was created manually, i.e., by a direct connection from a calling party to a human operator (a "ring down") along with human cross-connection by the operator to a called party.

More recently, a circuit is set up between an originating switch and a destination switch using a process known as signaling. Signaling sets up, monitors, and releases connections in a circuit-switched system. Different signaling methods have been devised. Telephone systems formerly used in-band signaling to set up and "tear down" calls. Signals of an in-band signaling system are passed through the same channels as the information being transmitted. Early electromechanical switches used analog or multi-frequency (MF) in-band signaling. Thereafter, conventional residential telephones used in-band dual-tone multiple frequency (DTMF) signaling to connect to an end office switch. Here, the same wires (and frequencies on the wires) were used to dial a number (using pulses or tones), as are used to transmit voice information. However, in-band signaling permitted unscrupulous callers to use a device such as a whistle to mimic signaling sounds to commit fraud (e.g., to prematurely discontinue billing by an interexchange carrier (IXC), also known as long distance telephone company).

More recently, to prevent such fraud, out-of-band signaling systems were introduced that use, for example, a packet network for signaling that is separate from the circuit switched network used for carrying information. For example, integrated services digital network (ISDN) uses a separate channel, a data (D) channel, to pass signaling information out-of-band. Common Channel Interoffice Signaling (CCIS) is a network architecture for out-of-band signaling. A popular version of CCIS signaling is Signaling System 7 (SS7). SS7 is an internationally recognized system optimized for use in digital telecommunications networks.

SS7 out-of-band signaling provided additional benefits beyond fraud prevention. For example, out-of-band signaling eased quick adoption of advanced features (e.g., caller-id) by permitting modifications to the separate signaling network. In addition, the SS7 network enabled long distance "Equal Access" (i.e., 1+ dialing for access to any long distance carrier) as required under the terms of the modified final judgment (MFJ) requiring divestiture of the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) from their parent company, AT&T.

While SS7 and other out-of-band signaling systems have advantages over in-band systems, they still have deficiencies. For example, the SS7 network is still more like X.25 rather than a broadband network. Also, SS7 is a limited protocol in that it only addresses setup, teardown, and monitoring of calls.

An SS7 network includes a variety of components. Service Switch Points (SSPs) are telephone offices which are directly connected to an SS7 network. All calls must originate in or be routed through an SSP switch. Calls are passed through connections between SSPs within the telecommunications network. A Signal Transfer Point (STP) is a component which passes signals between SSPs, other STPs, and Service Control Points (SCPs) for processing. An STP is a special application packet switch which operates to pass signaling information. Two STPs may be used together to provide redundancy.

An SCP is a special application computer which maintains information in a database required by users of the network. SCP databases may include, for example, a credit card database for verifying charge information or an "800" database for processing toll-free calls. The components in the SS7 network are connected by links. Typically, links between SSPs and STPs can be, for example, A, B, C, D, E or F links. Typically, redundant links are also used for connecting an SSP and its corresponding STPs. Customer premises equipment (CPE), such as a telephone, are connected to an SSP or an end office (EO).

To initiate a call in an SS7 telecommunications network, a calling party using a telephone connected to an originating end office (EO) switch, dials a telephone number of a called party. The telephone number is passed from the telephone to the SSP at the originating end office (referred to as the "ingress EO") of the calling party's local exchange carrier (LEC). A LEC is commonly referred to as a local telephone company. First, the SSP will process triggers and internal route rules based on satisfaction of certain criteria. Second, the SSP will initiate further signals to another EO or access tandem (AT), for example, if necessary. The signaling information can be passed from the SSP to STPs, which route the signals for communication between the ingress EO and the terminating end office, or egress EO. The egress EO has a port designated by the telephone number of the called party. The call is set up as a direct connection between the EOs through tandem switches if no direct trunking exists or if direct trunking is full. If the call is a long distance call, i.e., between a calling party and a called party located in different local access transport areas (LATAs), then the call is connected through an inter exchange carrier (IXC) switch of any of a number of long distance companies. Such a long distance call is commonly referred to as an inter-LATA call. LECs and IXCs are collectively referred to as the public switched telephone network (PSTN).

Emergence of a competitive LEC (CLEC) was facilitated by passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which authorized competition in the local phone service market. Traditional LECs or RBOCs are now also known as incumbent LECs (ILECs). Thus, CLECs compete with ILECs in providing local exchange services. A large cost associated with setting up and operating a CLEC is the equipment needed to circuit switch data and voice calls.

Since the LECs handle both voice and data communications, large amounts of information are communicated. Bandwidth concerns are always present. The PSTN still has deficiencies, particularly with regard to data communications, for such problems as network congestion and bottlenecks.

The PSTN is ill-equipped to handle the integration of data and voice communications. Today, data and voice calls are sent through the same network. Data communications are presently layered on top of voice switching.

Circuit switching is the process of setting up and keeping a circuit open between two or more users, such that the users

have exclusive and full use of the circuit until the connection is released. Packet switching is like circuit switching in that it can also switch information between users. Unlike circuit switching, packet switching does not leave a circuit open on a dedicated basis. Packet switching has conventionally been a data switching technique. Packet switching separates a communication into pieces called packets. A packet can contain addressing information, such as, for example, a destination address. In packet switching, the addresses of a packet are read by a switch and the packet is then routed down a path toward a switch associated with the destination address. Different packets can take diverse paths to reach the eventual destination. Typically, in the last switching office before the packets reach the destination user, the packets can be assembled and sequenced.

A channel, also known as a circuit, is a 64 (Kbps) building block of T1 series. A circuit is derived from the digitization and coding of analog signals. Digitization involves taking 8000 samples per second (i.e., twice the highest voice frequency of 4,000 Hz) for voice traffic. When coded in 8 bit words a 64 Kbps building block is yielded. This circuit is termed a Level 0 Signal and is represented by DS-0 (Digital Signal at Level 0). Combining 24 of these channels into a serial bit stream using time division multiplexing (TDM) is performed on a frame-by-frame basis. A frame is a sample of all 24 channels (i.e., the multiplicative product of 24 and 8 bits is 192 bits) plus a synchronization bit called a framing bit, which yields a block of 193 bits. Frames are transmitted at a rate of 8,000 per second (corresponding to the sampling rate), thus creating a 1.544 Mbps (i.e., the product of 8,000 and 193 is 1.544 Mbps) transmission rate, which is the standard T1 rate. This rate is termed DS-1.

Queuing refers to the act of stacking or holding calls to be handled by a specific person, trunk or trunk group. Queuing theory deals with the study of the behavior of a system that uses queuing, such as a telephone system. Queuing is very important to the design of packet networks where speed of transmission more than offsets the delay of waiting for a transmission facility to become available.

Telephone call traffic is measured in terms of centi call seconds (CCS) (i.e., one hundred call seconds of telephone conversations). One hour of calling traffic, also known as an Erlang (named after a queuing theory engineer), is equal to 36 CCS (i.e., the product of 60 minutes per hour and 60 seconds per minute divided by 100, the theoretical limit of a trunk). An Erlang is used to forecast trunking and TDM switching matrix capacity. A "non-blocking" matrix (i.e., the same number of lines and trunks) can theoretically switch 36 CCS of traffic. Numerically, traffic on a trunk group, when measured in Erlangs, is equal to the average number of trunks in use during the hour in question. For example, if a group of trunks carries 20.25 Erlangs during an hour, a little more than 20 trunks were busy.

At times of high data traffic, the internal CCS of call traffic of the tandem and egress switches climbs, resulting in such problems as network blocking and busy signals. Data calls traditionally pass through tandem and egress switches before being switched to a Wide Area Network (WAN) access device. The tandem and egress switches have become bottlenecks.

Growth of the Internet has led to increased data communications traffic that has exacerbated the problem. Corporations that provide remote modem access to data networks provide dial-up and direct connections. One important example of such corporations are Internet Service Providers (ISPs) provide dial-up and direct connection access to

Internet subscribers. Dial-up access is based on transmission using the serial line interface protocol (SLIP) or point-to-point protocol (PPP) to the ISP's network access device. An ISP's network access device can include a communications server. A communications server represents one of several devices connected to a local area network (LAN) or wide area network (WAN). A network router can be connected to the LAN. A network router can be, for example, a computer running routing software, or a dedicated routing device. The router's serial port is used to provide a high-speed communications connection from the ISP to an Internet network service provider (NSP).

Many ISPs are small, start-up companies that face challenges in obtaining the startup capital required to fund large capital expenditures required to purchase the data termination and protocol conversion equipment, including routers, communications servers, and racks filled with modems. ISPs must also expend significant sums of money to the ILEC for large numbers of access lines required to pass data calls through tandem and egress switches before being switched to WAN access devices. ISPs must pass on these costs to their subscribers.

Similarly, a business entity must also invest substantial capital to purchase communications equipment, when, for example, the entity needs to provide employees remote access to a private data network.

The attributes of modem or Internet-type data traffic are very different from those of voice traffic. First, the traffic is qualitatively different. The duration of data traffic (e.g., 20 minutes, 12 hours, or more) is typically longer than voice traffic (e.g., 3 minutes) and therefore requires different queuing theory. Ironically, a data call often does not even need access to the line all the time since an Internet call can contain "bursty traffic", i.e., intermittent bursts of upstream and downstream traffic. Because voice and modem traffic are structurally different, the probability distribution must be adjusted accordingly. The statistical distribution for voice calls is an "exponential distribution," i.e., most calls are 3 minutes or less in duration, and there is a rapidly decreasing number of calls lasting longer than 3 minutes. Data calls (e.g., modem, fax, internet, etc.) have a mean holding time on the order of 20 minutes, and the distribution of holding times instead of having an exponential distribution, has a "power law distribution," meaning it is not extraordinary to encounter calls of very long duration such as, e.g., 12 hours, a day, or even longer.

Second, modem internet traffic is also quantitatively different from voice traffic. The Internet modem traffic generates much higher loads. Residential lines have been engineered expecting to generate loads of 3 or 4 CCS, and business lines, 5 or 6 CCS. If the same customer begins using the same line for Internet traffic, the load can easily double or triple.

Today, the public network is optimized for voice. However, modem traffic has overtaken voice in the local exchange. Queuing theory has not been adjusted for this occurrence, resulting in public network dysfunction. For example, growth in popularity of fixed rate, unlimited access services from ISPs has excessively burdened the PSTN circuit-switch infrastructure. Each unlimited access connection can tie up a dedicated circuit through a tandem switch and/or an egress end office (EO) switch. What is needed then is an improved system for handling data communications, which would allow data to bypass the local exchange's egress switches and the associated costs from local telephone companies.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention includes a system implementation and a method implementation. The system implementation is directed to a system for bypassing the egress facilities of a telecommunications system. The system comprises a gateway, a network access server and a control server. The gateway communicates with a telecommunications carrier by receiving and transmitting signaling messages. The network access server terminates data calls for termination processing and/or for re-originating said data calls. The control server communicates with the gateway for distinguishing between voice calls and data calls received from the telecommunications carrier and for sending the data calls to the network access server.

The gateway communicates with a switch facility in the telecommunications carrier via the signaling messages. The switch can be, for example, a class 3/4 access tandem switch or a class 5 end office switch.

The gateway can be, for example, a first application program running on a host computer; and the control server can be a second application program running on the host computer or on a second host computer. The first application program and the second application program intercommunicate.

In one embodiment, the control server has a communications portion for communicating with the gateway. The communications portion of the control server and the gateway communicate, for example, via an X.25 protocol format, a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format. Many other formats are available as well.

In one embodiment, the control server has a communications portion for communicating with a communications portion of the network access server. The communications portion of the control server and the communications portion of the network access server communicate via a protocol such as the network access server (NAS) messaging interface (NMI) protocol (described below) and/or an IPDC protocol (provided in a publically available document, as noted below)."

In one embodiment, the network access server extends a first network to a second network by establishing a protocol tunnel for the data calls. For example, the first network is a virtual private network and the second network is a data network. The tunnel is established using a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP).

In an alternative embodiment to the latter, the network access server converts the data calls from a first digitized format into a second digitized format for delivery of the data calls to a destination data network. The network access server comprises a first device, this first device terminating the data calls on at least one modem. For example, this first device is a modem network access server bay.

In a preferred embodiment, the first digitized format can be a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, or a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format, an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell packet format, a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP) format, a NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI) protocol format, an Appletalk protocol format, a DECnet, BANYAN/VINES, an internet packet exchange (IPX) protocol format, and an internet control message protocol (ICMP) protocol format. The second format can be, for example, a serial line interface protocol

(SLIP) protocol format, or a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format. However, the list of formats that can be used for the first format and the second format can be the same.

The network access server can comprise a second device for time division multiplexing the data calls onto the network access server. The second device can be a tandem network access server bay.

The system can further include a database for distinguishing between voice calls and data calls. The database includes a table comprising called party numbers and the terminating points corresponding to the called party numbers. If the control server determines that a called party number corresponds to a data modem, then the call is a data call.

In one embodiment, the system further includes a voice switch for switching the voice calls and for transmitting the voice calls from the system.

The system can be implemented as an open architecture platform that is leased by or owned by an incumbent local exchange carrier (ILEC), an interexchange carrier (IXC), a competitive local exchange carrier (CLEC), or an enhanced services provider. In one embodiment, the gateway, control server, network access server, and the voice switch are collocated. In another embodiment, the gateway, control server, network access server, and the voice switch are in different geographical regions.

The method implementation of the invention is directed to a method for bypassing data from egress facilities of a telecommunications carrier. The method includes establishing a call with the open architecture telecommunications system, determining whether the call is a voice call or a data call, and terminating the call onto a network access server for termination processing if the call is a data call.

The step of establishing a call with the telecommunications system includes receiving signaling information to set up a call coming into the open architecture telecommunications system, informing a control server that a call has arrived on the open architecture telecommunications system, and receiving the call at the open architecture telecommunications system. The step of receiving signaling information comprises receiving signaling information at a gateway. In one embodiment, signaling system 7 (SS7) signaling information is received at the gateway.

The step of determining whether the call is a voice call or a data call includes using a telephone number of a called party to determine whether the call is a voice call or a data call. The telephone number can be, for example, a number used to access at least one network device of an Internet Services Provider (ISP), at least one network device of a competitive local exchange (CLEC) carrier, or a customer premises equipment (CPE).

In one embodiment, the step of terminating the call onto a network access server for termination processing includes converting the call from a first protocol to a second protocol. The first protocol can include, for example, a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, or a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format. The second protocol can be the same formats as well, though the second format is preferably different than the first protocol format.

In another embodiment, the step of terminating the call onto a network access server for termination processing includes providing a protocol tunnel from a first network to a second network. Here, it is possible to use a virtual private network protocol to extend the first network to the second network. The virtual private network protocol can be, for example, a point-to-point tunneling (PPTP) protocol. The

first network can be a virtual private network, whereas the second network can be a data network.

The terminating step can further include terminating the call to a voice switch if the call is a voice call. The voice switch will switch and transmit the call.

The present invention provides a number of important features and advantages. First, the open architecture telecommunications system (or platform), employing SS7 signaling and open architecture protocol messaging, uses application logic to identify and direct incoming data calls straight to a terminal server. This permits the bypassing of a voice switch entirely. This results in significant cost savings for an entity (such as an ISP, an ILEC, or a CLEC) providing service, as compared to the conventional means of delivering data calls through the ILEC. This decrease in cost results partially from bypass of the egress ILEC and office switch for data traffic.

A further advantage for ISPs is that they are provided data in the digital form used by data networks (e.g., IP data packets), rather than the digital signals conventionally used by switched voice networks (e.g., PPP signals). Consequently, they need not perform costly modem conversion processes that would otherwise be necessary. The elimination of many telecommunications processes frees up the functions that ISPs, themselves, would have to perform to provide Internet access.

By separating voice and data traffic, and circuit-switching only the voice traffic through a traditional switch (e.g., a NORTEL DMS 500), the CLEC can use a smaller voice switch, decreasing the capital expense it must pass on to its customers (including ISPs). Thus, it becomes less expensive for the ISPs to route data traffic through a CLEC.

By differentiating between the voice and data traffic on a single platform, different types of traffic can be optimally routed. Thus, for example, video traffic being transported over a modem, can be more efficiently routed over an appropriate carrier rather than through a dedicated circuit switched line.

The open architecture telecommunications system can virtually handle an infinite number of data modem traffic destined for Internet service providers (ISPs). This system is scalable by using fewer intelligent network access devices than conventionally used. The present invention obviates the need to purchase additional circuit switching hardware to support switching of data traffic.

The open architecture telecommunications system also enables the use of a modem pool at, for example, a CLEC. This is advantageous to the ISPs, or business entities owning private data networks, because it offloads complex functions from ISPs to a specialized platform (also known as a Network Service Provider (NSP)) and redistributes capital expenditures to the CLEC NSP. The CLEC NSP often has better access to investment capital than would an ISP. The CLEC NSP also benefits from economies of scale by servicing multiple ISPs with a large pool of modems.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

The present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying figures, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram providing an overview of a standard telecommunications network;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating an overview of a standard telecommunications network;

FIG. 3 illustrates a signaling network in greater detail;

FIG. 4 provides an overview of the present invention in that it provides an enhanced telecommunications network;

FIG. 5 illustrates an open architecture platform in detail; FIG. 6 illustrates an object oriented or wire line protocol format Open Architecture SS7 Gateway application and SS7 adapter communicating directly with lower level libraries;

FIG. 7 illustrates an object oriented or wire line protocol format Open Architecture Control Server application;

FIG. 8 illustrates an exemplary Network Access Server bay;

FIG. 9A is a more elaborate view of the present invention;

FIG. 9B depicts multiple collocated or geographically diverse SS7 Gateways, Control Servers, Databases and Network Access Servers;

FIGS. 10A, 10B and 10C, are flow charts illustrating how an originating caller gains access to an open architecture platform;

FIG. 11 is a flow chart describing how the open architecture platform handles an inbound call;

FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating a complex outbound call;

FIG. 13 is a state diagram illustrating NAS side inbound call handling on the open architecture platform of the present invention;

FIGS. 14A and 14B are flow charts illustrating a state diagram of NAS side exception handling;

FIG. 15 is a state diagram illustrating NAS side release request handling;

FIG. 16 is a state diagram illustrating NAS side release TDM connection handling;

FIGS. 17A and 17B are state diagrams illustrating NAS side continuity test handling; and

FIGS. 18A and 18B are state diagrams illustrating NAS side outbound call handling initiated by a NAS for use in callback.

In the figures, like reference numbers generally indicate identical, functionally similar, and/or structurally similar elements. The figure in which an element first appears is indicated by the leftmost digit(s) in the reference number.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

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 - j. Outbound Call Flow (Starting from the NAS, with Continuity Testing)
 - k. TDM Pass-through Call Request Flow (Inter-switch Connection)
 - l. Call Releasing Flow (from NAS)
 - m. Call Releasing Flow (from GW)
 - n. Complex Outbound Call Request Flow Example
 - o. Continuity Test Flow
 - p. Keep-alive Test Flow
 - q. Reset Request Flow

V. Conclusion

I. An Example Environment

The present invention is described in terms of an example environment. The example environment uses an open architecture platform for transmission of voice and data information received from a telecommunications carrier. As used herein, a telecommunications carrier can include domestic entities such as ILECs, CLECs, IXCs and Enhanced Service Providers (ESPs), as well as global entities recognized by those skilled in the art. In addition, as used herein a telecommunications system includes domestic systems used by such entities as ILECs, CLECs, IXCs and Enhanced Service Providers (ESPs), as well as global systems recognized by those skilled in the art.

In the preferred embodiment, the open architecture platform is implemented on a SUN Workstation model 450, available from Sun Microsystems, Inc., Palo Alto, Calif. The Sun workstation is interconnected with tandem network access service (NAS) bays and modem NAS bays and provides signaling and control functions. The tandem NAS bays and modem NAS bays can be ASCEND Access Concentrators, model TNT, available from Ascend Communications, Inc., Alameda, Calif. Voice traffic is received at the tandem NAS bays and routed to a NORTEL DMS switch, model DMS 500, available from NORTEL, Richardson, Tex. for routing to a called party.

Data traffic is received at the tandem NAS bays, and is routed to a modem NAS bay for modem termination, where the data traffic is modulated from, for example, the point-to-point protocol (PPP) to an auxiliary protocol such as, for example, the internet protocol (IP) for reorigination and transmission to a data network.

In the alternative, a virtual private networking protocol, such as the point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP), can be used to create a "tunnel" between a remote user and a data

network. A tunnel permits a network administrator to extend a virtual private network from a server (e.g., a Windows NT server) to a data network (e.g., the Internet).

Where a conversion does take place, the converted data traffic is routed, for example, over an Ethernet/WAN (e.g., an Ethernet switch) connection to an internal backbone on the network, and sent to network routers for transmission to a data network, such as for example the network of an Internet Service Provider (ISP). Network routers can include, for example, a computer, such as the SUN workstation running routing software or a dedicated routing device such as various models from CISCO of San Jose, Calif., ASCEND of Alameda, Calif., NETOPIA of Alameda, Calif., or 3COM of Santa Clara, Calif.

Although the invention is described in terms of this example environment, it is important to note that description in these terms is provided for purposes of illustration only. It is not intended that the invention be limited to this example environment or to the precise inter-operations between the above-noted devices. In fact, after reading the following description, it will become apparent to a person skilled in the relevant art how to implement the invention in alternative environments.

The invention provides two functions which those skilled in the art will recognize can be implemented in many ways. The first function is that the invention bypasses data from the egress facilities used to complete a call. This includes, for example, the network nodes or systems used to terminate a switched voice call to a called party or to terminate a data connection with a data network.

The second function is that the invention provides for termination and reorigination of the call. In one embodiment, data is converted from a first digital form (e.g., in a point-to-point (PPP) digital format) used by the ingress telecommunications services provider (telecommunications carriers including enhanced service providers) to a second form used by a destination data network (e.g., IP data packets). This function is traditionally performed by the entities controlling the destination data network (e.g., ISPs).

In another embodiment, a virtual private networking protocol (e.g., a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP)), can be used to create a "tunnel" between a remote user and a data network. The call terminates at the modem and reoriginate from that destination to another point.

After having the benefit of reading this disclosure, those skilled in the art will recognize that many types of resources, whether collocated or geographically separated, may be used to perform these functions.

II. Definitions

Table 1 below defines common telecommunications terminology. These terms are used throughout the remainder of the description of the invention.

TABLE 1

Term	Definition
60 local exchange carrier (LEC)	LECs are providers of local telecommunications services.
inter-exchange carrier (IXC)	IXCs are providers of US domestic long distance telecommunications services. AT&T, Sprint and MCI are example IXCs.
incumbent LEC (ILEC)	ILECs are the traditional LECs, which include the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs).

TABLE 1-continued

Term	Definition
competitive LEC (CLEC)	CLECs are telecommunications services providers capable of providing local services that compete with ILECs. A CLEC may or may not handle IXC services as well.
local access and transport area (LATA)	A LATA is a region in which a LEC offers services. There are 161 LATAs of these local geographical areas within the United States.
end office (EO)	An EO is a class 5 switch used to switch local calls connected ("homed") to EO, meaning that EO's are the last switches to which the subscribers are connected.
central office (CO)	A CO is a facility that houses an EO homed. EO's are often called COs.
access tandem (AT)	An AT is a class $\frac{3}{4}$ switch used to switch calls between EO's in a LATA. An AT provides subscribers access to the IXCs, to provide long distance calling services. An access tandem is a network node. Other network nodes include, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral (IP).
switching hierarchy or office classification	An office class is a functional ranking of a telephone central office switch depending on transmission requirements and hierarchical relationship to other switching centers. Prior to divestiture, an office classification was the number assigned to offices according to their hierarchical function in the U.S. public switched network (PSTN). The following class numbers are used: class 1 - Regional Center (RC), class 2 - Sectional Center (SC), class 3 - Primary Center (PC), class 4 - Toll Center (TC) if operators are present or else Toll Point (TP), class 5 - End Office (EO) a local central office. Any one center handles traffic from one to two or more centers lower in the hierarchy. Since divestiture and with more intelligent software in switching offices, these designations have become less firm. The class 5 switch was the closest to the end subscriber. Technology has distributed technology closer to the end user, diffusing traditional definitions of network switching hierarchies and the class of switches. A class 5 switching office is an end office (EO) or the lowest level of local and long distance switching, a local central office. The switch closest to the end subscriber.
class 5 switch	A class 5 switching office was a Toll Center (TC) if operators were present or else a Toll Point (TP); an access tandem (AT) has class 4 functionality.
class 4 switch	A class 3 switching office was a Primary Center (PC); an access tandem (AT) has class 3 functionality.
class 3 switch	A class 1 switching office, the Regional Center (RC), is the highest level of local and long distance switching, or "office of last resort" to complete a call.
class 1 switch	TCP/IP is a protocol that provides communications between interconnected networks. The TCP/IP protocol is widely used on the Internet, which is a network comprising several large networks connected by high-speed connections.
transmission control protocol/internet protocol (TCP/IP)	IP is part of the TCP/IP protocols. It is used to recognize incoming messages, route outgoing messages, and keep track of Internet node addresses (using a number to specify a TCP/IP host on the Internet). IP corresponds to network layer of OSI.
internet protocol (IP)	TCP is an end-to-end protocol that operates at the transport and sessions layers of OSI, providing delivery of data bytes between processes running in host computers via separation and sequencing of IP packets.
transmission control protocol (TCP)	

TABLE 1-continued

Term	Definition
5 point-to-point (PPP) protocol	PPP is a protocol permitting a computer to establish a connection with the Internet using a modem. PPP supports high-quality graphical front ends, like Netscape.
10 point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP)	A virtual private networking protocol, point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP), can be used to create a "tunnel" between a remote user and a data network. A tunnel permits a network administrator to extend a virtual private network (VPN) from a server (e.g., a Windows NT server) to a data network (e.g., the Internet).
15 point of presence (POP)	A POP refers to the location within a LATA where the IXC and LEC facilities interface. A GPOP refers to the location where international telecommunications facilities and domestic facilities interface, an international gateway POP.
20 global point of presence (GPOP)	Bearer (B) channels are digital channels used to carry both digital voice and digital data information. An ISDN bearer channel is 64,000 bits per second, which can carry PCM-digitized voice or data.
25 Internet service provider (ISP)	An ISP is a company that provides Internet access to subscribers.
25 integrated services digital network (ISDN)	ISDN is a network that provides a standard for communications (voice, data and signaling), end-to-end digital transmission circuits, out-of-band signaling, and a features significant amount of bandwidth.
30 local area network (LAN)	A LAN is a communications network providing connections between computers and peripheral devices (e.g., printers and modems) over a relatively short distance (e.g., within a building) under standardized control.
35 private branch exchange (PBX)	A PBX is a private switch located on the premises of a user. The user is typically a private company which desires to provide switching locally.
40 customer premises equipment (CPE)	CPE refers to devices residing on the premises of a customer and used to connect to a telephone network, including ordinary telephones, key telephone systems, PBXes, video conferencing devices and modems.
45 wide area network (WAN)	A WAN is a data network that extends a LAN over the circuits of a telecommunications carrier. The carrier is typically a common carrier. A bridging switch or a router is used to connect the LAN to the WAN.
50 public switched telephone network (PSTN)	The PSTN is the worldwide switched voice network.
55 packetized voice or voice over a backbone	One example of packetized voice is voice over internet protocol (VOIP). Voice over packet refers to the carrying of telephony or voice traffic over a data network, e.g., voice over frame, voice over ATM, voice over Internet Protocol (IP), over virtual private networks (VPNs), voice over a backbone, etc.
60 digitized data (or digital data)	Digitized data refers to analog data that has been sampled into a binary representation (i.e., comprising sequences of 0's and 1's). Digitized data is less susceptible to noise and attenuation distortions because it is more easily regenerated to reconstruct the original signal.
65 number planning area (NPA); NXX	NPA is an area code. NXX is an exchange, identifying the EO homed to the subscriber. (The homed EO is typically called a central office (CO).)

TABLE 1-continued

Term	Definition
digital access and cross-connect system (DACS)	A DACS is a device providing digital routing and switching functions for T1 lines, as well as DS0 portions of lines, for a multiple of T1 ports.
modified final judgment (MFJ)	Modified final judgment (MFJ) was the decision requiring divestiture of the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) from their parent company, AT&T.
equal access	1+ dialing as used in US domestic calling for access to any long distance carrier as required under the terms of the modified final judgment (MFJ) requiring divestiture of the Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) from their parent company, AT&T.
regional Bell operating companies (RBOCs)	RBOCs are the Bell operating companies providing LEC services after being divested from AT&T.
inter machine trunk (IMT)	An IMT is a circuit between two commonly-connected switches.
network node	A network node is a generic term for the resources in a telecommunications network, including switches, DACS, regenerators, etc. Network nodes essentially include all non-circuit (transport) devices. Other network nodes can include, for example, equipment of a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), a point-of-presence (POP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP).
intelligent peripheral	An intelligent peripheral is a network system (e.g. a general purpose computer running application logic) in the Advanced Intelligent Network Release 1 (AIN) architecture. It contains a resource control execution environment (RCEE) functional group that enables flexible information interactions between a user and a network. An intelligent peripheral provides resource management of devices such as voice response units, voice announcers, and dual tone multiple frequency (DTMF) sensors for caller-activated services. The intelligent peripheral is accessed by the service control point (SCP) when services demand its interaction. Intelligent peripherals provide an intelligent network with the functionality to allow customers to define their network needs themselves, without the use of telephone company personnel. An intelligent peripheral can provide a routing decision that it can terminate, but perhaps cannot regenerate.
telecommunications carrier	A LEC, a CLEC, an IXC, an Enhanced Service Provider (ESP), an intelligent peripheral (IP), an international/global point-of-presence (GPOP), i.e., any provider of telecommunications services.
calling party	The calling party is the caller placing a call over any kind of network from the origination end.
called party	The called party is the caller receiving a call sent over a network at the destination or termination end.
ingress	Ingress refers to the connection from a calling party or origination.
egress	Egress refers to the connection from a called party or termination at the destination end of a network, to the serving wire center (SWC).
ingress EO	The ingress EO is the node or serving wire center (SVC) with a direct connection to the calling party, the origination point. The calling party is "homed" to the ingress EO.
egress EO	The egress EO is the node or destination EO with a direct connection to the called party, the termination point. The called party is "homed" to the egress EO.

TABLE 1-continued

Term	Definition
5 signaling system 7 (SS7)	SS7 is a type of common channel interoffice signaling (CCIS) used widely throughout the world. The SS7 network provides the signaling functions of indicating the arrival of calls, transmitting routing and destination signals, and monitoring line and circuit status.
10 centum call seconds (CCS)	Telephone call traffic is measured in terms of centum call seconds (CCS) (i.e., one hundred call seconds of telephone conversations). $\frac{1}{10}$ of an Erlang.
15 Erlang	An Erlang (named after a queuing theory engineer) is one hour of calling traffic, i.e. it is equal to 36 CCS (i.e., the product of 60 minutes per hour and 60 seconds per minute divided by 100). An Erlang is used to forecast trunking and TDM switching matrix capacity. A "non-blocking" matrix (i.e., the same number of lines and trunks) can theoretically switch 36 CCS of traffic. Numerically, traffic on a trunk group, when measured in Erlangs, is equal to the average number of trunks in use during the hour in question. Thus, if a group of trunks carries 20.25 Erlangs during an hour, a little more than 20 trunks were busy.
20 Enhanced Service Provider (ESP) trunk	A network services provider.
25 inter machine trunk (IMT)	A trunk connects an access tandem (AT) to an end office (EO).
30 Private Line with a dial tone	An inter-machine trunk (IMT) is a circuit between two commonly-connected switches. A private line is a direct channel specifically dedicated to a customer's use between two specified points. A private line with a dial tone can connect a PBX or an ISP's access concentrator to an end office (e.g. a channelized T1 or PRI). A private line can also be known as a leased line.
35 plain old telephone system (POTS)	The plain old telephone system (POTS) line provided basic service supplying standard single line telephones, telephone lines and access to the public switched telephone network (PSTN). ALL POTS lines work on loop start signaling. One "starts" (seizes) a phone line or trunk by giving a supervisory signal (e.g. taking the phone off hook). Loop start signaling involves seizing a line by bridging through a resistance the tip and ring (both wires) of a telephone line.
40	An ISDN Basic Rate Interface (BRI) line provides 2 bearer B channels and 1 data D line (known as "2B+D" over one or two pairs) to a subscriber.
45 integrated service digital network (ISDN) basic rate interface (BRI) line	An ISDN Primary Rate Interface (PRI) line provides the ISDN equivalent of a T1 circuit. The PRI delivered to a customer's premises can provide 23B+D (in North America) or 30B+D (in Europe) channels running at 1.544 megabits per second and 2.048 megabits per second, respectively.
ISDN primary rate interface (PRI)	A pipe or dedicated communications facility connects an ISP to the internet.
50	
55	
III. Introduction	
A. An Overview of a Telecommunications Network	
60	FIG. 1 is a block diagram providing an overview of a standard telecommunications network 100 providing local exchange carrier (LEC) services within a local access and transport area (LATA). Telecommunications network 100 provides a switched voice connection from a calling party 102 to a called party 110, as well as a data connection from calling party 102 to, for example, an Internet service provider (ISP) 112. Calling party 102 and called party 110 can be ordinary telephone equipment, key telephone systems, private branch exchanges (PBXs), or applications running
65	

on a host computer. ISP 112 can in the alternative be, for example, a private data network. For example, calling party 102 can be an employee working on a notebook computer at a remote location who is accessing his employer's private data network through, for example, a dial-up modem connection.

FIG. 1 also includes end offices (EOs) 104 and 108. EO 104 is called an ingress EO because it provides a connection from calling party 102 to public switched telephone network (PSTN) facilities. EO 108 is called an egress EO because it provides a connection from the PSTN facilities to a called party 110. In addition to ingress EO 104 and egress EO 108, the PSTN facilities associated with telecommunications network 100 include an access tandem (AT) 106 that provides access to one or more inter-exchange carriers (IXCs) for long distance traffic. Alternatively, it would be apparent to a person having ordinary skill in the art that AT 106 could also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral.

EO 104 and AT 106 are part of a switching hierarchy. EO 104 is known as a class 5 office and AT 106 is a class 3/4 office switch. Prior to the divestiture of the RBOCs from AT&T, an office classification was the number assigned to offices according to their hierarchical function in the U.S. public switched network (PSTN). An office class is a functional ranking of a telephone central office switch depending on transmission requirements and hierarchical relationship to other switching centers. A class 1 office was known as a Regional Center (RC), the highest level office, or the "office of last resort" to complete a call. A class 2 office was known as a Sectional Center (SC). A class 3 office was known as a Primary Center (PC). A class 4 office was known as either a Toll Center (TC) if operators were present, or otherwise as a Toll Point (TP). A class 5 office was an End Office (EO), i.e., a local central office, the lowest level for local and long distance switching, and was the closest to the end subscriber. Any one center handles traffic from one or more centers lower in the hierarchy. Since divestiture and with more intelligent software in switching offices, these designations have become less firm. Technology has distributed functionality closer to the end user, diffusing traditional definitions of network hierarchies and the class of switches.

Network 100 includes an Internet service provider (ISP) 112. The Internet is a well-known, worldwide network comprising several large networks connected together by data links. These links include, for example, Integrated Digital Services Network (ISDN), T1, T3, FDDI and SONET links. Alternatively, an internet can be a private network interconnecting a plurality of LANs and WANs, such as, for example, an intranet. ISP 112 provides Internet services for subscribers such as calling party 102.

To establish a connection with ISP 112, calling party 102 can use a host computer connected to a modem (modulator/demodulator). The modem will modulate data from the host computer into a form (traditionally an analog form) for transmission to the LEC facilities. Typically, the LEC facilities convert the incoming analog signal into a digital form. In one embodiment, the data is converted into the point-to-point protocol (PPP) format. (PPP is a well-known protocol that permits a computer to establish a connection with the Internet using a standard modem. It supports high-quality, graphical user-interfaces, such as Netscape.) As those skilled in the art will recognize, other formats are available, including a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format, an asynchronous transfer mode

(ATM) cell packet format, a serial line interface protocol (SLIP) protocol format, a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format, a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP) format, a NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI) protocol format, an Appletalk protocol format, a DECnet, BANYAN/VINES, an internet packet exchange (IPX) protocol format, and an internet control message protocol (ICMP) protocol format.

Note that FIG. 1 and other figures described herein include lines which may refer to communications lines or which may refer to logical connections between network nodes, or systems, which are physically implemented by telecommunications carrier devices. These carrier devices include circuits and network nodes between the circuits including, for example, digital access and cross-connect system (DACS), regenerators, tandems, copper wires, and fiber optic cable. It would be apparent to persons of ordinary skill that alternative communications lines can be used to connect one or more telecommunications systems devices. Also, a telecommunications carrier as defined here, can include, for example, a LEC, a CLEC, an IXC, an Enhanced Service Provider (ESP), a global or international services provider such as a global point-of-presence (GPOP), and an intelligent peripheral.

EO 104 and AT 106 are connected by trunk 116. A trunk connects an AT to an EO. Trunk 116 can be called an inter machine trunk (IMT).

AT 106 and EO 108 are connected by a trunk 118 which can be an IMT. EO 108 and ISP 112 can be connected by a private line 120 with a dial tone. Private line 120 with a dial tone can be connected to a modem bay or access converter equipment at ISP 112. Private line 120 can also connect a PBX (not shown) to EO 108, for example. Examples of a private line are a channelized T1 or PRI. ISP 112 can also attach to the Internet by means of a pipe or dedicated communications facility. A pipe can be a dedicated communications facility. Private line 120 can handle data modem traffic to and from ISP 112.

Trunks 116 and 118 can handle switched voice traffic and data traffic. For example, trunks 116-118 can include digital signals DS1-DS4 transmitted over T1-T4 carriers. Table 2 provides typical carriers, along with their respective digital signals, number of channels, and bandwidth capacities.

TABLE 2

Digital signal	Number of channels	Designation of carrier	Bandwidth in Megabits per second (Mbps)
DS0	1	None	0.064
DS1	24	T1	1.544
DS2	96	T2	6.312
DS3	672	T3	44.736
DS4	4032	T4	274.176

Alternatively, trunks 116 and 118 can include optical carriers (OCs), such as OC-1, OC-3, etc. Table 3 provides typical optical carriers, along with their respective synchronous transport signals (STSs), ITU designations, and bandwidth capacities.

TABLE 3

Optical carrier (OC) signal	Electrical synchronous transport signal (STS)	International Telecommunications Union (ITU) terminology	Bandwidth in Megabits per second (Mbps)
OC-1	STS-1	STM-1	51.84
OC-3	STS-3	STM-3	155.52
OC-9	STS-9	STM-3	466.56
OC-12	STS-12	STM-4	622.08
OC-18	STS-18	STM-6	933.12
OC-24	STS-24	STM-8	1244.16
OC-36	STS-36	STM-12	1866.24
OC-48	STS-48	STM-16	2488.32

As noted, private line 120 is a connection that can carry data modem traffic. A private line is a direct channel specifically dedicated to a customer's use between two specified points. A private line can also be known as a leased line. In one embodiment, private line 120 is an ISDN/primary rate interface (ISDN PRI) connection. An ISDN PRI connection includes a single signal channel (called a data or D channel) on a T1, with the remaining 23 channels being used as bearer or B channels. (Bearer channels are digital channels that bear voice and data information.) If multiple ISDN PRI lines are used, the signaling for all of the lines can be carried over a single D channel, freeing up the remaining lines to carry only bearer channels.

Network 100 also includes a CCIS network for call setup and call tear down. Specifically, FIG. 1 includes a Signaling System 7 (SS7) network 114. This SS7 network is described more fully below with reference to FIG. 3 below.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating an overview of a standard telecommunications network 200, providing both LEC and IXC carrier services between subscribers located in different LATAs. Telecommunications network 200 is similar to telecommunications network 100, except that calling party 102 and a called party 224 are located in different LATAs. In other words, calling party 102 is homed to ingress EO 104 in a first LATA, whereas called party 224 is homed to an egress EO 222 in a second LATA. Calls between subscribers in different LATAs are long distance calls that are typically routed to IXCs. Sample IXCs in the United States include AT&T, MCI and Sprint.

AT 106 provides connection to points of presence (POPs) 202, 204 and 206. IXCs 214, 216 and 218 provide connection between POPs 202, 204 and 206 (in the first LATA) and POPs 208, 210 and 212 (in the second LATA). POPs 208, 210 and 212, in turn, are connected to AT 220, which provides connection to egress EO 222. Called party 224 receives calls from EO 222, which is its homed EO. Alternatively, it would be apparent to a person having ordinary skill in the art that an AT 106 can also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral.

In addition to providing a voice connection from calling party 102 to called party 224, the PSTN provides calling party 102 a data connection to an ISP 226. ISP 226 is similar to ISP 112.

B. The Signaling Network

FIG. 3 illustrates SS7 network 114 in greater detail. SS7 network 114 is a separate network used to handle the set up, tear down, and supervision of calls between calling party 102 called party 110 (or ISP 226). SS7 network 114 includes service switching points (SSPs) 316, 318, 320 and 322, signal transfer points (STPs) 302, 304, 306, 308, 310 and 312, and service control point (SCP) 314.

In the SS7 network, the SSPs are the portions of the backbone switches providing SS7 functions. The SSPs can be, for example, a combination of a voice switch and an SS7 switch, or a computer connected to a voice switch. The SSPs communicate with the switches using primitives, and create packets for transmission over the SS7 network.

EOs 104, 222 and ATs 106, 220 can be respectively represented in SS7 network 114 as SSPs 316, 318, 320 and 322. Accordingly, the connections between EOs 104, 222 and ATs 106, 220 (presented as dashed lines) can be represented by connections 334, 336, 338 and 340. The types of these links are described below.

The STPs act as routers in the SS7 network, typically being provided as adjuncts to in-place switches. The STPs route messages from originating SSPs to destination SSPs. Architecturally, STPs can and are typically provided in "mated pairs" to provide redundancy in the event of congestion or failure and to share resources (i.e., load sharing is done automatically). As illustrated in FIG. 3, STPs can be arranged in hierarchical levels, to provide hierarchical routing of signaling messages. For example, mated STPs 302, 304 and mated STPs 306, 308 are at a first hierarchical level, while mated STPs 310, 312 are at a second hierarchical level.

SCPs provide database functions. SCPs can be used to provide advanced features in an SS7 network, including routing of special service numbers (e.g., 800 and 900 numbers), storing information regarding subscriber services, providing calling card validation and fraud protection, and offering advanced intelligent network (AIN) services. SCP 314 is connected to mated STPs 310 and 312.

In the SS7 network, there are unique links between the different network elements. Table 4 provides definitions for common SS7 links.

Referring to FIG. 3, mated STP pairs are connected by C links. For example, STPs 302, 304, mated STPs 306, 308, and mated STPs 310, 312 are connected by C links (not labeled). SSPs 316, 318 and SSPs 320, 322 are connected by F links 342 and 344.

Mated STPs 302, 304 and mated STPs 306, 308, which are at the same hierarchical level, are connected by B links 350, 352, 366 and 372. Mated STPs 302, 304 and mated STPs 310, 312, which are at different hierarchical levels, are connected by D links 346, 348, 354 and 356. Similarly, mated STPs 306, 308 and mated STPs 310, 312, which are at different hierarchical levels, are connected by D links 358, 360, 368 and 370.

SSPs 316, 318 and mated STPs 302, 304 are connected by A links 334 and 336. SSPs 320, 322 and mated STPs 306, 308 are connected by A links 338 and 340.

SSPs 316, 318 can also be connected to mated STPs 310, 312 by E links (not shown). Finally, mated STPs 310, 312 are connected to SCP 314 by A links 330 and 332.

For a more elaborate description of SS7 network topology, the reader is referred to Russell, Travis, Signaling System #7, McGraw-Hill, New York, N.Y. 10020, ISBN 0-07-054991-5, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TABLE 4

SS7 link terminology	Definitions
Access (A) links	A links connect SSPs to STPs, or SCPs to STPs, providing network access and database access through the STPs.

TABLE 4-continued

SS7 link terminology	Definitions
Bridge (B) links	B links connect mated STPs to other mated STPs.
Cross (C) links	C links connect the STPs in a mated pair to one another. During normal conditions, only network management messages are sent over C links.
Diagonal (D) links	D links connect the mated STPs at a primary hierarchical level to mated STPs at a secondary hierarchical level.
Extended (E) links	E links connect SSPs to remote mated STPs, and are used in the event that the A links to home mated STPs are congested.
Fully associated (F) links	F links provide direct connections between local SSPs (bypassing STPs) in the event there is much traffic between SSPs, or if a direct connection to an STP is not available. F links are used only for call setup and call teardown.

IV. The Present Invention

A. Overview of Data Bypass

FIG. 4 includes an overview of an enhanced telecommunications network 400 according to the present invention. This invention relates to the convergence of two types of networks, i.e., voice and data networks. Telecommunications network 400 provides a bypass connection from the ingress EO 104 (a class 5 switch) or from AT 106 (a class 3/4 switch) to the called party 110 and ISP 112. Alternatively, it would be apparent to a person having ordinary skill in the art that an AT 106 can also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral. The connection is called a bypass connection because it bypasses the connections from the egress EO 108 to called party 110 and ISP 112. In other words, for example, the facilities of the incumbent LEC (ILEC) terminating the call of originating caller 102 are bypassed.

Telecommunications network 400 includes open architecture platform 402. Telecommunications network 400 also includes trunks 404 and 406, connection 408, and trunk 410, which, for example, respectively connect open architecture platform 402 to EO 104, to AT 106 (i.e., any telecommunications carrier), to ISP 112 (i.e., or a business entity's private data network), and to called party 110. In a preferred embodiment, trunks 404 and 406 can handle both data and voice traffic. However, trunks 404 and 406 must be capable of handling at least data traffic. In a preferred embodiment, connection 408 and trunk 410 can handle data or voice traffic. However, connection 408 must be capable of handling at least data traffic (i.e. including any type of digitized data). It should also be apparent to a person having ordinary skill, that connection 408, for example, is a logical connection that can contain various network devices.

As noted, open architecture platform 402 can receive both voice and data traffic. This traffic can be received from any network node of a telecommunications carrier. A telecommunications carrier can include, for example, a LEC, a CLEC, an IXC, and an Enhanced Service Provider (ESP). In a preferred embodiment, this traffic is received from a network node which is, for example, a class 5 switch, such as EO 104, or from a class 3/4 switch, such as AT 106. Alternatively, the network system can also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral. Accordingly, open architecture platform 402 integrates both voice and data traffic on a single platform.

Data traffic refers, for example, to a data connection between a calling party 102 (using a modem) and a server 412 in ISP 112. A data connection is established between calling party 102 and EO 104, then over a trunk 404 to open architecture platform 402, then over a connection 408 to ISP 112, and then over a connection 414 to server 412. Alternatively, the connection can be established from calling party 102 to EO 104, then to AT 106, then over trunk 406 to open architecture platform 402, then over connection 408 to ISP 112, and then over connection 414 to server 412.

Voice traffic refers, for example, to a switched voice connection between calling party 102 and called party 110. It is important to note that this is on a point-to-point dedicated path, i.e., that bandwidth is allocated whether it is used or not. A switched voice connection is established between calling party 102 and EO 104, then over 404 to open architecture platform 402, then over trunk 410 to called party 110. Alternatively, the connection can be established from calling party 102 to EO 104 and then to AT 106, then over trunk 406 to open architecture platform 402, then over trunk 410 to called party 110. In another embodiment, AT 106 can also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral.

Open architecture platform 402, and communications links 404, 406, 408 and 410 comprise the resources of an ILEC or a competitive LEC (CLEC). A CLEC may or may not provide inter-LATA calls, which are traditionally handled by IXCs.

B. Detailed Description of Data Bypass

1. The Open Architecture Platform

FIG. 5 illustrates open architecture platform 402 in detail. Open architecture platform 402 includes an open architecture switch 502 and a voice switch 506. Open architecture platform 402 receives data and voice traffic from the PSTN (over communications links 404 and 406) and separates data traffic from voice traffic. Data traffic is handled by open architecture switch 502, while voice traffic is handled by voice switch 506.

Voice calls switched by voice switch 506 are sent out from the open architecture platform 402. For example, an outbound voice call is sent from voice switch 506 over communications link 410 to called party 110.

On the other hand, outbound data calls are passed onto a modem NAS bay (which can be a resource on open architecture switch 502) for modem termination. For example, a data signal (e.g., in the PPP protocol) can be converted to protocol used by data networks (e.g., into internet protocol (IP) data packets), for transmission over routers to a data network, such as an ISP. Specifically, an outbound data call will be sent to modem NAS bay 514, then to routers (not shown), and then sent to ISP 112 over communications link 408. As another example, a virtual private networking protocol can be used to create a "tunnel" between the remote user and a data network. For example, calling party 102, using a server that supports a tunnel protocol (e.g., PPTP) will have an extended virtual private network connection with a data network, such as ISP 112.

As noted, open architecture platform 402 comprises open architecture switch 502 and voice switch 506. Open architecture switch 502 includes gateway (GW) 508, tandem network access server (NAS) bay 504, and modem NAS bay 514.

GW 508 comprises SS7 gateway (SS7 GW) 512, control server 510, and database 516 communicating with control server 510. GW 508 can include multiple SS7 GWs 512 and multiple control servers 510 (each having one or more

databases 516). Database 516 can be internal to GW 508 or alternatively, external to GW 508.

It is important to note that the open architecture platform is defined by the function of the resources comprising it, and how these resources are interrelated. Accordingly, there is no reason that GW 508, tandem NAS bay 504, and modem NAS bay 514 would be required to be collocated, or limited to a particular geographical area, see FIG. 9B, below. Further, the architecture is infinitely scalable over geographic boundaries. As long as any resources match the functions and interoperabilities defined herein, then such resources comprise open architecture platform 402. The same holds true for the subcomponents comprising any platform resources, e.g., the subcomponents of GW 508 (defined below).

Gateway 508 has two functions: interfacing with the CCIS signaling network (e.g., the SS7 signaling network 114) and interfacing with a plurality of control servers to control a plurality of NAS bays. SS7 GW 512 provides the first function of providing an interface to the SS7 signaling network 114. The SS7 signaling information is conveyed to control server 510.

Control server 510 provides the second function of controlling one or more NAS bays which comprise resources of open architecture switch 502. Specifically, control server 510 communicates with tandem NAS bay 504 and modem NAS bay 514. This communication is performed via a protocol understood by the open architecture platform 402 resources, referred to herein as an open architecture protocol.

The open architecture protocol is represented by dotted lines 518 and 520. In one embodiment, the open architecture protocol is the network access server (NAS) messaging interface (NMI) protocol, created by XCom Technologies Inc. This protocol is defined by a series of control messages, which are defined below in table form. Another protocol is called the Internet Protocol Device Control (IPDC), recently released by a Technical Advisory Council (TAC) and Level 3 Communications, Inc. The IPDC specification, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, is available in its current draft on the Level 3 Communications web site <http://www.Level3.com>. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that any comparable protocol will suffice, so long as the protocol permits the resources of the open architecture platform 402 to communicate with one another.

In one embodiment, as depicted in FIG. 9B, below, one or more of SS7 GW 512, control server 510, database 516, and NAS are geographically diverse devices (or applications running on devices). For example, these devices can be connected by communications links using Ethernet, frame relay, asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), or any other conceivable protocols. In another embodiment, one or more of SS7 GW 512, control server 510, database 516, and NAS 902 are collocated devices (or applications running on devices), see FIG. 9B.

In a preferred embodiment, SS7 GW 512 and control server 510 are applications running on one or more collocated host computers. Alternatively, the applications can be run on one or more geographically diverse computers. For example, the host computers can be one or more redundantly interconnected SUN workstations, model 450, for example, available from Sun Microsystems. FIGS. 6 and 7 below are representations used to illustrate the intercommunications between SS7 GW 512 and control server 510 in the preferred embodiment.

FIG. 6 symbolically illustrates an example SS7 GW 512 application (as implemented using computer programs). The SS7 GW 512 application, labeled open architecture platform (OAP) SS7 GW application 600, provides communications between SS7 network 114 and open architecture switch 502. The SS7 signaling information is translated into, for

example, an object-oriented, or wire line protocol format form for cross-platform compatibility, ease of transport, and parsing.

As illustrated in FIG. 6, OAP SS7 adapter 602 communicates directly with the lower level libraries, such as TCP/UDP 604 and IP 606, provided by manufacturers of SS7 interface cards and by manufacturers of host computers used in particular applications. OAP SS7 comservice 608 of OAP comservice 610 queues messages between OAP SS7 adapter 602 and the remainder of OAP SS7 GQ application 600. It is important to note that any number of protocols recognized by those skilled in the art can be used. For example, instead of TCP/IP or UDP/IP, the X.25 protocol can be used instead.

OAP task master 620 maintains a pool of threads that are assigned to one or more OAP task slaves 622. OAP SS7 GW application 600 is cued by an OAP metronome 624 to read tasks from OAP scheduler 626. OAP task slave 622 is an abstract base class from which is derived a number of unique slaves that may initiate SS7 signals in response to messaging from SS7 network 114.

Messages from SS7 network 114 are received through SS7 adapter 602 and passed to OAP comservice 610 and OAP task master 620. OAP task master 620 schedules tasks to respond to each of the messages. Each message is then passed to OAP comservice 610 again to be transferred to an appropriate control server 510.

Messages may also be stored in OAP historian 628. If appropriate, the tasks from OAP scheduler 626 are performed and appropriate messages are passed back to SS7 network 114 through OAP adapter 602.

The processing of messages from control servers 510 operates in a similar manner. The messages come through OAP comservice 610 and are passed to OAP task master 620. OAP task master 620 then determines appropriate tasks, if any, and transfers the messages on to the adapter to be sent on SS7 network 114.

An example control server 510 application (as implemented using computer programs) is illustrated symbolically in FIG. 7. FIG. 7 illustrates the OAP control server application 700, which is a call processing coordinator.

OAP control server application 700 receives SS7 signals in object or wire line protocol form from SS7 GW 512. Based upon the signals, it handles resource allocation, signaling responses and translation services.

OAP comservice 708 is similar to OAP comservice 610 (in SS7 GW 512) because it operates to receive and send messages between itself and SS7 GW application 600. OAP task master 710 determines and schedules tasks to be performed by OAP control server application 700. OAP task slave 712 is an abstract base class from which are derived unique classes for each message.

OAP translator 714 object or wire line protocol format maps telephone numbers onto OAP database 716. OAP database 716 contains the destination of the call, any class functions associated with the call, the type of routing algorithm that should be used, and a status associated with the telephone number. OAP router service 718 is an object or wire line protocol which transports requests for routing paths, including both delivery and receipt of responses.

OAP state 720 is a collection of data on the state of each circuit identifier code (CIC) which exists between a given SS7 GW 512 originating point code (OPC) and a destination point code (DPC). This data includes the current status of the trunk and information on recent messaging. The roles of the CIC, the OPC and the DPC with respect to SS7 network 114 are discussed in greater detail below.

OAP NAS comservice 706 is a communications object or wire line protocol format that is responsible for receipt and delivery of messages from NAS bays 504 and 514. When a message is received from SS7 GW 512, it is handed to OAP

task master 710. OAP task master 710 instantiates OAP task slave 712 object or wire line protocol format suitable for the particular type of message. If a call transaction is initiated, OAP task slave 712 requests information concerning the called subscriber from OAP translator 714, and a route to reach the subscriber from OAP router service 718. OAP state 720 is updated to indicate that a call is in progress from the CIC associated with the message. Finally, NAS comservice 706 signals NAS bays 504, 514 to instantiate the route for the call.

When a NAS bay responds with a control message, OAP NAS comservice 706 converts the message into an object or wire line protocol format and passes the object or wire line protocol format to OAP task master 710. OAP task master 710 instantiates a suitable OAP task slave 712. By checking OAP state 720, task slave 720 correlates the message with an earlier received message from OAP SS7 GW application 600, and formulates a response message to be delivered to OAP SS7 GW application 600 through OAP comservice 708.

Maintenance and Monitoring interface (MMI) 722 is a graphical user interface that communicates with either SS7 gateway application 600 or control server application 700 to update the starting configuration or the running state, and to monitor and modify various runtime factors. Such factors may include in-progress calls, circuit supervisory information, circuit deployment and maintenance, and similar activities. OAP router service 718 runs as a query daemon, providing a variety of routing strategies for the distribution of incoming and outgoing calls across the large, redundant network. OAP control server application 700 further includes OAP Historian 724.

FIG. 8 illustrates an exemplary NAS bay 802. NAS bay 802 is a generic view of either tandem NAS bay 504 or modem NAS bay 514. NAS bay 802 includes modules 804, 806, 808, and 810. Each of these modules is a slot card used to implement one or more interfaces with network lines. A line is a set of channels (e.g., a line on a T1 carrier). A channel is a time-slot on a line. Accordingly, each connection established with a NAS bay 802 can be uniquely identified by a module/line/channel identifier. Table 5 provides definitions for NAS bay terms.

TABLE 5

NAS bay terminology	Definitions
network access server (NAS) bay	A NAS bay is a facility that houses modules. Lines (having channels) are connected to the modules. Each connection into the bay can be uniquely identified by a module/line/channel identifier.
module	Modules are slot cards that receive communication lines, and perform functions on the channels of the lines. Modules can be used to perform time modulation and demodulation, to name a few functions.
line	A line is a set of channels (e.g., a line on a T1 carrier) interconnected with modules.
channel	A channel is a time-slot on a line.

Referring back to FIG. 5, tandem NAS bay 504 receives data and voice traffic from the PSTN (i.e., from the EO 104 over connection 404 or from AT 106 over connection 406). Call traffic can also originate from, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral. Tandem NAS bay 504 also cross-connects

an incoming data call to modem NAS bay 514 through a matrix using time division multiplexing (TDM). This function, of providing pass-through of data, is referred to herein as data bypass.

5 Modem NAS bay 514 terminates a data call to one of its modems and the modems allow for the device to convert the inbound data call from one protocol to another. In lieu of modem NAS bay 514, any art-recognized devices providing the functions of modulation and demodulation can be used.

10 Examples include a software implementation (an application running on a computer), a modem using a digital signal processor (DSP), or a data service unit/channel service unit (DSU/CSU). In one embodiment, modem NAS bay 514 can provide the modulation/demodulation function, of converting the signal from a first data format used by the telecommunications services provider that provides access to the open architecture platform 402 (e.g., in PPP format) to a second format (e.g., IP data packets) used by a destination data network such as ISP 112. As those skilled in the art will recognize, the particular second format need not be limited to IP data packets, depending primarily on the destination data network. As those skilled in the art will recognize, other protocol formats include a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format, routing table protocol (RTP) (e.g., Banyan VINES) format, an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell packet format, a serial line interface protocol (SLIP) protocol format, a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format, a point to point tunneling protocol (PPTP) format, a NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI) protocol format, an Appletalk protocol format, a DECNet format, and an internet packet exchange (IPX) protocol format.

In the alternative, a virtual private networking protocol 35 can be used to create a "tunnel" between a remote user (e.g., calling party 102 using a server that supports tunneling) and the destination data network (e.g., ISP 112). One example of a virtual private networking protocol is PPTP.

An exemplary modem NAS bay 514 is an ASCEND 40 access concentrator, model TNT, available from Ascend Communications, Inc., which is analogous to a NAS bay 802 with modems functioning on modules 804, 806, 808, and 810. Those skilled in the art will recognize that the modem function described above is conventionally performed by the 45 destination data networks (e.g., ISP 112), not by an ILEC or a CLEC. In this sense, the present invention simplifies the functions of the destination data network providers, such as ISPs.

It must be noted that it is not necessary to implement the 50 present invention by way of conventional NAS devices. Any network elements providing the dual functions of data bypass (i.e., as provided by tandem NAS bay 504) and conversion of data by means of modem termination into a format usable by a data network (i.e., as provided by modem 55 NAS bay 514) will suffice. Those skilled in the art will recognize that a number of network devices can be combined to provide these functions.

As those skilled in the art will recognize, transmission control protocol (TCP) and internet protocol (IP) 60 (collectively called TCP/IP) form a packet switching protocol comprised of the TCP and IP protocols, which are layers of protocols that act together. IP is a protocol that functions at the network layer of the Open Systems Interconnect (OSI) data network architecture model, and as noted, provides 65 packetizing of data into units also called datagrams, containing address information. TCP is a protocol that functions at the session and transport layers of the OSI data model,

providing the separation, transmission, retransmitting, and sequencing of data packets. TCP establishes a connection between two systems intending to exchange data, performing messaging control functions. IP is said to "ride on top of" TCP, i.e., IP is a simpler protocol than TCP in that IP only addresses and sends. TCP breaks a message down into IP packets and uses CHECKSUM error checking logic to guarantee delivery of the message from the first system to the second.

It is important to note that this invention deals with the convergence of voice and data networks. The reader should appreciate that voice networks and data networks were formerly two separate networks. The office classification switching hierarchy discussed above is a voice network architecture and has no correlation to the OSI model which is a data networking architecture.

It is also important to note that open architecture switch 502 can include one or more of gateways 508, one or more tandem network access server (NAS) bays 504 and one or more modem NAS bays 514. Therefore, the number of these elements is not important, so long as their respective functions are met.

FIG. 9A is a more elaborate view of the open architecture platform of the invention. The open architecture platform shown in FIG. 9A is the same as open architecture platform 402 (shown in FIG. 5), except for the additional resources described below.

In FIG. 9A, NAS bay 902 provides both the tandem functions of tandem NAS bay 504 and the modem functions of modem NAS bay 514. In other words, NAS bay 902 will provide the data bypass function of tandem NAS bay 504, as well as the modem termination function of modem NAS bay 514. Voice traffic is transmitted over trunks 930 or 932 to voice switch 506. Voice switch 506 can transmit the voice traffic, for example, over private line 934 to PBX 912.

If the call comprises data traffic, NAS bay 902 will use modems to convert the incoming data call into a form suitable for a destination data network (e.g., PPP data packets) for transmission to other data nodes over open architecture platform 402. For example, the resulting data packets are transmitted over an Ethernet/WAN connection 903 (using an Ethernet/WAN protocol), in conjunction with TCP/IP. It would be apparent to one of skill in the art that alternative network architecture could be used, such as, for example, FDDI, SONET, ATM, etc.

Connection 903 terminates in internal backbone 936. Internal backbone 936 can be any type of data link. Routers 904, 906 route the IP data packets from internal backbone 936 to ISPs 938, 940. Exemplary network routers include network routers from various companies such as, CISCO, 3COM, NETOPIA, and NORTEL, or a host computer running routing software. Specifically, the data packets are transmitted from router 904 to router 908 in ISP 938, and from router 906 to router 910 in ISP 940. Thus, the customers of ISPs 938, 940 can dial into communication servers at the ISP location, which can dedicated routers 908, 910. Thus, ISPs 938, 940 can route data traffic to routers on open architecture platform 402.

In one embodiment, ISP 948 can use a network service provider (NSP) to provide a modem pool for use by the customers of ISP 948. A CLEC implementing open architecture platform 402 can comprise an NSP. Modems in NAS bay 902 can be used by subscribers of ISPs 938, 940 and 948 for interconnectivity, and traffic can also be routed to other network nodes via the routers. Modem pooling at the NSP level reduces capital expenditures by ISPs 938, 940, 948.

The invention enables network access point (NAP) switching which involves exchanging data traffic on the

architecture. A NAP switches the call based on routing instructions it receives. Online services can be performed so-called "on the box."

NAS bay 942 can be the same type of device as NAS bay 902, in that it provides both the tandem functions of tandem NAS bay 504, and the modem functions of modem NAS bay 514. NAS bay 942 is used to represent other connections that can be established with open architecture platform 402.

Calling party 914 is another party that can establish a data connection using a modem connected to a host computer. However, calling party 914, via its host computer, has the additional feature of providing voice over IP (VOIP) service over communications link 944.

PBX 916 is a centralized switch providing its collocated customers both switching and access to NAS bay 942. This access is provided over T1/ISDN PRI private line 946.

It is possible to access open architecture platform 402 using any type of digital subscriber line (DSL) connection. Calling party 924 and computer 922 access NAS bay 942 over a high bit rate DSL (HDSL), known as a single pair HDSL (SDSL) 920. HDSL can place a two-way T1 on a normal unshielded, bridged (but not loaded) twisted pair copper wire loop 982. In an embodiment of SDSL, an existing single pair copper wire on the local loop is used to transmit full duplex data at up to 768 Kbps. Transmission at 1.54 Mbps is achieved by using two SDSL lines, i.e., two pairs of wires.

SDSL 920 permits simultaneous voice and data transmission through a DSL device 918 (e.g., a splitter), which can be collocated with calling party 924 and computer 922. Alternatively, access can be obtained without a splitter device. In addition, calling party 924 and computer 922 can access NAS bay 942 over ISDN DSL (IDSL) link 926. In an embodiment of IDSL, an existing local loop, i.e., a single pair of copper wires, is used to transmit full duplex data at 128 Kbps. Alternatively, calling party 924 and computer 922 can access NAS bay 942 over xDSL 928. In an embodiment of xDSL, an existing local loop, i.e., a single pair of copper wires, is used to transmit digital subscriber line communications.

In one embodiment of the invention, a CLEC implementing open architecture platform 402 can accept data traffic from other CLECs or ILECs, providing data bypass for the egress leg of data calls. In such an embodiment, the implementing CLEC can charge back the other CLECs or ILECs an "unbundled element" for providing this service to the egress facilities involved (i.e., the egress EO's belonging to the ILECs or used by the other CLECs'). It is important to note that reciprocal compensation does not exist everywhere and other arrangements do exist. While this is the predominant arrangement, this is not necessarily the only arrangement. This approach, of having an NSP/CLEC charge back an ILEC or other CLEC for offloading of data traffic, can save the offloaded CLEC or ILEC significant capital expenditures related to the switching of data traffic.

Voice traffic is transmitted over trunks 930 or 932 to voice switch 506. Voice switch 506 can transmit the voice traffic, for example, over private line 934 to PBX 912.

2. Data Bypass Operations

FIGS. 10A-10B depict flow charts illustrating how an originating caller gains access to open architecture platform 402. FIGS. 10A-10B are described with reference to FIGS. 1, 4, 5 and 9.

FIG. 10A depicts a method 1000 for receiving an inbound call which bypasses the facilities of an egress switch according to the present invention. Alternatively, other call flows are possible, including a call requiring a modem calling back

for security reasons, using outbound calling from open architecture platform 402.

In step 1002 of FIG. 10A, the technique receives signaling information to set up data calls and voice calls from a calling party to a called party. In step 1004, the technique converts the signaling information into an open architecture protocol format. In step 1006, data calls and voice calls are received at open architecture switch 502. In step 1008, the technique distinguishes between data calls and voice calls. In step 1010, the technique controls NASs, i.e., NAS bays 504 and 514, using the open architecture protocol. In step 1012, the method terminates data calls to modems in a modem NAS bay, e.g., in modem NAS 514, for conversion to a packetized data format for transmission to network nodes. Alternatively, in step 1012, a tunnel is established between the user and the destination data network. In step 1014, the method transmits voice calls to a voice switch for transmission to the called party.

FIGS. 10B and 10C depict more detailed description of the technique outlined in FIG. 10A. Specifically, these figures depict an inbound call flow into open architecture platform 402. An inbound call is where an incoming call (into the open architecture platform) is connected to a called party (for a voice connection) or an ISP (for a data connection).

Referring to FIG. 10B, in step 1018 an originating caller 102 (shown in FIG. 1) gains access to LEC facilities. This is performed according to known methods as described with respect to FIG. 1. As one example, originating caller 102, using a telephone, can go off-hook to place a switched voice call to the LEC facilities. As another example, calling party 102 can use a host computer, in concert with a modem, to establish a data connection with the LEC facilities (i.e., the modem of calling party 102 takes the line off-hook). As those skilled in the art will recognize, any of the access methods described with respect to FIG. 9A, in addition to other known methods, can be used to access the LEC facilities.

In step 1020, signaling information for the call is received by the homed EO, the originating EO, indicating that calling party 102 is attempting to make a call. As noted, the homed EO, often referred to as a central office CO, is the EO having a direct connection with the originating caller. (This is true for voice calls and for data calls.) In FIG. 1, the homed EO is ingress EO 104. Conventionally, for this leg of the call, i.e., between the telephone or modem of calling party 102 and EO 104, the LEC uses in-band signaling implemented with pulse or tone dialing. The homed EO then sends back a dial tone to calling party 102.

In step 1022, the originating caller, calling party 102, hears a dial tone and dials a telephone number to access the open architecture platform 402. The dialed number, for example, in the currently used domestic US 10-digit standard NPA-NXX-XXXX format (i.e., Europe, for example, has a different 32 digit standard), can be the telephone number of called party 110, or a number used to access an ISP which can be virtually mapped to a table of terminating points.

In step 1024, the LEC facilities perform a table lookup and then transmit the call to a facility (e.g., a class 4 AT switch or a class 5 EO switch) that is connected to open architecture platform 402. First, EO 104 will look up the dialed number in translation tables (external to the EO) which will indicate which switch of the LEC facility is to receive the call. Next, EO 104 will transmit appropriate signaling information to transmit the call along a path to that facility.

It should be noted that if the regulatory environment were to change as to permit CLECs or other interconnecting parties to access originating office triggers from ILECs, then it would be possible to route the call traffic differently.

It should be noted that this step is optional, because it is possible that EO 104 (the homed EO) provides a direct connection with open architecture platform 402. It is also possible that calling party 102 will have a connection to a network node or system (e.g. an intelligent peripheral, a GPOP, etc.) that is not an EO or AT switch, which will provide a direct connection to open architecture platform 402. It is also possible that the homed EO will provide a connection to another type of network device (i.e., not an EO or an AT) that will, in turn, provide a direct connection to open architecture platform 402.

The leg of the call described in step 1024 can be connected using in-band signaling or out-of-band signaling. (The same is true for the legs of the call following this leg.) In one embodiment, SS7 signaling is used to terminate the call to the facility providing access to the open architecture platform 402. Referring to FIG. 4 or FIG. 9A, AT 106 and EO 104 are, for example, facilities providing access to open architecture platform 402. Alternatively, these facilities could include, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral.

With SS7 signaling, the ISDN User Part (ISUP) protocol can be used. ISUP features numerous messages that are transmitted within the SS7 network, which are used to establish call set up and call teardown. In the present case, an initial address message (IAM) is sent to AT 106 or EO 104. Of course, AT 106 can also be, for example, a CLEC, or other enhanced service provider (ESP), an international gateway or global point-of-presence (GPOP), or an intelligent peripheral. The IAM can include such information as the calling party number (i.e., the telephone number of calling party 102, although the IAM doesn't necessarily contain calling party, especially in local environment), the called party number (i.e., the telephone number dialed by calling party 102), the origination point code (OPC), the destination point code (DPC), and the circuit identification code (CIC). (The OPC, DPC and CIC were discussed above with respect to FIG. 7). The OPC identifies the switch from which the call is to be transmitted on the present leg of the call, which in this case is homed EO 104. The DPC identifies the switch to which the present leg of the call is to be routed. Taking the example of a call that is connected to open architecture platform 402 by AT 106, the SS7 signaling will transmit the call from EO 104 to AT 106. The CIC identifies the bearer channel over which the call is coming in to AT 106 from EO 104. Each AT 106 looks at the called number and then does its own routing, by reviewing the contents of the IAM and determining the next switch to send the call to, by setting the next DPC in order to continue routing the call.

It should be noted that ISUP messages are transmitted from signaling point to signaling point in the SS7 network in the above-noted manner, until the signaling is completed to a destination switch, node or trunk (i.e., at a called party). For example, it is possible that once the call is sent to homed EO 104, it is sent to intermediate switches (i.e., other EOs and ATs) before it arrives at AT 106. In this case, each switch along the path of the call will create an IAM with information reflecting the next leg of the call. For each leg, the OPC and DPC are modified, and the receiving switch looks for the call in the bearer channel specified by the CIC which is included in the IAM.

In step 1026, the LEC facilities perform a table lookup and then transmit the call to open architecture switch 502.

AT 106 creates an IAM. This IAM can include the calling party's number (if available), the called party's number, the point code of AT 106 as the OPC, the point code of the open architecture switch 502 as the DPC, and the CIC representing the bearer channel over link 406 containing the call. The IAM is sent to the SS7 GW 512, presenting the call on a bearer channel represented by another CIC over link 406 to tandem NAS bay 504 (a bearer channel interface).

In step 1028, SS7 GW 512 receives signaling information in the IAM message from SS7 network 114, and delivers the information to control server 510. SS7 GW 512 has multiple physical A-link interfaces into the SS7 network (i.e. preferably one which supports international as well as US Domestic SS7 signaling) over which signaling data is received. In a preferred embodiment, SS7 GW 512 functionality is implemented as an application executing on a SUN Microsystems workstation model 450, for example, available from Sun Microsystems, Inc. using an SS7 adapter from, for example, DGM&S model Omni 5.0 SignalWare, available from DGM&S Telecom, Mount Laurel, N.J. In this preferred embodiment, SS7 GW 512 and control server 510 are applications in communication with one another, running on one or more such interconnected host computers. As noted, FIGS. 6 and 7 illustrate one example embodiment.

Referring to FIGS. 6 and 7, these applications are symbolically represented as OAP SS7 GW application 600 and OAP control server application 700. The communications between SS7 GW 512 and control server 510, which together comprise GW 508, were specifically described with respect to these figures. SS7 GW 512 parses the IAM message, providing the OPC, DPC, calling party number and called party number, *inter alia*, to control server 510.

SS7 GW 512 also functions as a protocol state machine for each ISUP SS7 circuit. In this respect, SS7 GW 512 holds a protocol state machine for each call that is in process. If SS7 GW 512 does not get a response from control server 510 within a certain timeout period, then it sends a default response out to the SS7 network, which is in the present case a release (REL) message. The REL message indicates to homed EO 104 (i.e., via its SSP portion) that the call is to be released because a timeout occurred. SS7 GW 512 does not necessarily perform the routing itself, but rather communicates with the control server 510 which controls the routing functions.

Referring to FIG. 10C, in step 1030, the control server must determine whether the call is a data call or a voice call to take appropriate actions. Control server 510 looks up the called party number in internal or external database 516 to determine whether the call is a data call or a voice call. Based on the type of call, control server 510 indicates to control facilities (associated with tandem NAS bay 504) how to route the traffic.

Control server 510 communicates with the control facilities in tandem NAS bay 504 via the open architecture protocol. The control messages comprising the protocol are defined in Table 6 generically and in Tables 7-20 in detail. The flows of the control messages, between GW 508 (primarily referring to control server 512 in GW 508) and tandem NAS bay 504 (primarily referring to control facilities in tandem NAS bay 504) are provided in Tables 22-38. For an even more detailed view of these flows, the reader is referred to FIG. 11, which illustrates the control facilities of tandem NAS bay 504 (including protocol control 1102, call control 1106 and resource management 1104) and GW 508, as well as FIGS. 13-18B, which provide detailed views of the selected flows.

If control server 510 determines the call is a data call, in step 1032, it sends a message to the control facilities of

tandem NAS bay 504 indicating this condition. The tandem NAS bay sends back an acknowledgment. Table 27 illustrates an example message flow for this step.

In step 1034, a data call over a given bearer channel (e.g., a DS0 channel) is time division multiplexed by tandem NAS bay 504 for termination at particular modems. The data call arriving over a given bearer channel on connection 406 (from AT 106) is assigned to a module on modem NAS bay 514. In other words, the incoming bearer channel is assigned to a given bay/module/line/channel (BMLC) going into modem NAS bay 514 to a terminating point. Table 32 illustrates an example message flow for this step.

In step 1036, a modem performs the conversion (i.e., a modem in modem NAS bay 514 converts the call from one form into a form suitable for a destination data network.) For example, the call can be converted from one type of data signal (e.g., a PPP data signal) into another form of data, such as packets (e.g., IP data packets) for routing to another point such as an ISP. As noted, alternatively, a tunnel can be established between the originating caller and the destination data network. Here, a virtual private network, to which the originating caller 102 is connected, is extended to the data network.

Step 1038 is the acceptance of the data call by the platform. As illustrated in Table 26, a message is sent from the control facilities of tandem NAS bay 504 to control server 510, indicating the inbound call is accepted by open architecture platform 402. Control server 510 then indicates an accepted data connection to SS7 GW 512, which in turn sends an address complete (ACM) message out over SS7 network 114. When homed EO 104 is made aware of this condition, it plays a ringing signal for calling party 102, or more specifically, to the modem used by calling party 102. This indicates a connection is about to be established with a modem.

In step 1040, the call is connected between a modem on modem NAS bay 514 and the modem of calling party 102. As illustrated in Table 27, a message is sent from the control facilities of tandem NAS bay 504 to control server 510, indicating that the inbound call is connected. Control server 510 then indicates a connection indication to SS7 GW 512, which in turn sends an answer (ANM) message over SS7 network 114. The modem of called party 102 then negotiates with a modem of modem NAS bay 514. Here, the name and password of the calling party are verified by the modem of modem NAS bay 514 via a radius server. The radius server authenticates the call, and assigns an IP address from the modem NAS bay 514, using the dialed number. The call is routed between calling party 102 and another point, such as, an ISP as described with respect to FIG. 9A.

If in step 1030 it is determined that the call is a voice call, the call is transmitted to a voice switch in step 1042. In this case, control server 510 will communicate to tandem NAS bay 504 to transmit the call to voice switch 506. Voice switch 506 will, in turn, use SS7 signaling (via SS7 signaling network 114) to place the call to a called party 110. Voice traffic is handled in a conventional manner. In a preferred embodiment, a NORTEL DMS switch, model DMS 500, available from NORTEL, Richardson, Tex., is used for switching of voice traffic.

In step 1044, call teardown occurs. For voice traffic effected between calling party 102 and called party 110, teardown occurs using SS7 signaling in a known manner.

For teardown of a data call, in a typical scenario, calling party 102 initiates the procedure by disconnecting the modem connection. Homed EO 104 sends a release (REL) message, which is transmitted over the SS7 signaling net-

work 114 to SS7 GW 512. SS7 GW 512 informs control server 510 of the condition. As illustrated in Table 34, control server 510 sends a message to the control facilities of tandem NAS bay 504 to release the call, which sends back an acknowledgment once the call is released.

It should be noted that the functions of SS7 GW 512, control server 510 and the NAS bays can all be contained in one collocated system. Many advantages can be achieved, however, by placing this functionality in several devices which can be collocated or placed in geographically diverse locations. For example, FIG. 9B depicts SS7 GWs 512a, 512b, and 512c, connected by multiple links (e.g., A-F links) to SS7 network 114. SS7 GWs 512a-512c and CSs 510a, 510b, and 510c, databases 516a, and 516b, NASs 902a, 902b, 902c, and 902d, and internal backbone 936, can be collocated or geographically diverse. In a preferred embodiment, for high availability, multiple redundant connections can connect redundant platform resources.

It should also be noted that the above-noted steps need not be performed in sequential order. Those skilled in the art will recognize this fact.

It would be apparent to a person having skill in the art that the above is only one implementation of the technology and that multiple implementations are possible. The reader is referred to the following tables and FIGS. 11-18B for a more detailed perspective.

3. NAS Bay to GW Communications

FIG. 11 is a block diagram illustrating the functional components of NAS bay 902, and how these components communicate with GW 508. In this more detailed view, NAS bay 902 includes protocol control application 1102, call control application 1106 and resource management application 1104. Protocol control application 1102 communicates with call control application 1106 by transmission of primitives. Protocol control application 1102 communicates with resource management application 1104 by the execution of procedure calls. GW 508 communicates with NAS bay 902 by the transmission of control messages. These control messages, implemented using the open architecture platform protocol, are described in detail in the sections below.

FIG. 12 illustrates a diagram used to show how complex outbound calls are handled. In these calls, a plurality of NAS bays are involved. Table 35 provides a description that is to be used in concert with FIG. 12.

FIGS. 13-18 provide a series of detailed flow charts (i.e., state diagrams) describing the communications flows between the subcomponents of NAS bay 902 (including protocol control application 1102, call control application 1106 and resource management application 1104) and GW 508. The state diagrams represent the state of protocol control application 1102 through several processes. The flow charts are exemplary and not exhaustive.

FIG. 13 depicts an inbound call handling (NAS Side) 1300 state diagram detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during receipt of an inbound call. Steps 1302 through 1356 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during the call.

FIGS. 14A and 14B depict NAS side exception handling 1400 state diagrams detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during exception handling. Steps 1402 through 1424 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during exception handling.

FIG. 15 depicts a NAS side release request handling 1500 state diagram detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during the process of a release request. Steps 1502 through 1526 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during the release request.

FIG. 16 depicts a NAS Side TDM connection handling 1600 state diagram detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during the receipt of a TDM call. Steps 1602 through 1630 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during the TDM call.

FIGS. 17A and 17B depict a NAS side continuity test handling 1700 state diagram detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during initiation of a continuity test. Steps 1702 through 1766 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during the test.

FIGS. 18A and 18B depict a NAS side outbound call handling (initiated by NAS) 1800 state diagram detailing the states of protocol control 1102 during initiation of an outbound call. Steps 1802 through 1872 outline in detail the state flow of protocol control 1102 during the call. An outbound call is a call initiated from the open architecture platform, for security reasons. In response to a call from a calling party, the platform initiates a call to the calling party, and performs password validation for the call.

4. Control Messages

Table 6 below provides a listing of the names and corresponding codes for control messages transmitted between GW 508 and NAS bay 902. Also included are the source of each message and the description for each message. For example, the NSUP message is transmitted from NAS bay 902 to GW 508, informing GW 508 that NAS bay 902 is coming up.

TABLE 6

Name	Code	Source	Description
NSUP	0x0081	NAS	Notify NAS coming up
ASUP	0x0082	GW	Acknowledgment to NSUP
NSDN	0x0083	NAS	Notify NAS is about to reboot
RST1	0x0085	GW	Request system reset - Drop all channels
ARST1	0x0086	NAS	Reset in progress - awaiting Reboot command
RST2	0x0087	GW	Request system reset (Reboot command)
ARST2	0x0088	NAS	Reboot acknowledgment
MRJ	0x00FF	GW or NAS	Message reject
RSI	0x0091	GW	Request system information
NSI	0x0092	NAS	Response to RSI
RBN	0x0093	GW	Request bay number
NBN	0x0094	NAS	Response to RBN
SBN	0x0095	GW	Set bay number
ABN	0x0096	NAS	Acknowledgment to SBN
RMI	0x0097	GW	Request module information
NMI	0x0098	NAS	Notify module information
RLI	0x0099	GW	Request line information
NLI	0x009A	NAS	Notify line information
RCI	0x009B	GW	Request channel information
NCI	0x009C	NAS	Notify channel information
SLI	0x009D	GW	Set line information
ASLI	0x009E	NAS	Acknowledgment to SLI
RGWI	0x00A1	GW	Request Gateway information
NGWI	0x00A2	NAS	Notify Gateway information
SGWI	0x00A3	GW	Set Gateway information
ASGWI	0x00A4	NAS	Acknowledgment to SGWI
RGWS	0x00A5	GW	Request Gateway status
NGWS	0x00A6	NAS	Notify Gateway status
RMS	0x0041	GW	Request module status
RLS	0x0043	GW	Request line status
RCS	0x0045	GW	Request channel status
NMS	0x0042	NAS	Notify module status
NLS	0x0044	NAS	Notify line status
NCS	0x0046	NAS	Notify channel status
SMS	0x0051	GW	Set a module to a given state
SLS	0x0053	GW	Set a line to a given state
SCS	0x0055	GW	Set a group of channels to a given state
NSCS	0x0056	NAS	Response to SCS
PCT	0x0061	GW	Prepare channel for continuity test

TABLE 6-continued

Name	Code	Source	Description
APCT	0x0062	NAS	Response to PCT
SCT	0x0063	GW	Start continuity test procedure with far end as loopback (Generate tone and check for received tone)
ASCT	0x0064	NAS	Continuity test result
RTE	0x007D	GW or NAS	Request test echo
ARTE	0x007E	NAS or GW	Response to RTE
RTP	0x007B	GW	Request test ping to given IP address
ATP	0x007C	NAS	Response to RTP
LTN	0x0071	GW	Listen for DTMF tones
ALTN	0x0072	NAS	Response to listen for DTMF tones
STN	0x0073	GW	Send DTMF tones
ASTN	0x0074	NAS	Completion result of STN command
RCSI	0x0001	GW	Request inbound call setup
ACSI	0x0002	NAS	Accept inbound call setup
CONI	0x0003	NAS	Connect inbound call (answer)
RCSO	0x0005	NAS or GW	Request outbound call setup
ACSO	0x0006	GW or NAS	Accept outbound call setup
CONO	0x0007	GW or NAS	Outbound call connected
RCST	0x0009	GW	Request pass-through call setup (TDM connection between two channels)
ACST	0x000A	NAS	Accept pass-through call
RCR	0x0011	GW or NAS	Release channel request
ACR	0x0012	NAS or GW	Release channel complete

5. A Detailed View of the Control Messages

The following section provides a more detailed view of the control messages transmitted between GW 508 and NAS bay 902.

a. Startup Messages

Table 7 below provides the Startup messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 7

Startup (registration and de-registration)		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
NSUP - Notify NAS coming up	0x01	Protocol version implemented (initially, set to 0).
	0x02	System ID
	0x03	System type
	0x04	Maximum number of modules (cards) on the system (whether present or not).
	0x05	Bay number.
ASUP - Acknowledgement to NSUP	0x02	System ID
NSDN - Notify NAS coming down (about to reboot)	0x02	System ID
RST1 - Request system reset - Drop all channels	0x02	System ID
ARST1 - Reset in progress - awaiting Reboot command	0x02	System ID

TABLE 7-continued

Startup (registration and de-registration)			
5	Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
	RST2 - Request system reset (Reboot command)	0x02	System ID
10	ARST2 - Reboot acknowledgment	0x02	System ID
		0x06	Result code:
		0x00	Request accepted. NAS will reboot now.
		0x01	Request denied. NAS will not reboot.
15			

b. Protocol Error Messages

Table 8 below provides the Protocol error messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 8

Protocol error handling			
25	Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
	MRJ - Message reject	0xFE	ISDN cause code
30			This message is generated by the NAS or GW when a message is received with an error, such as an invalid message code, etc. The ISDN cause code indicates the main reason why the message was rejected.

c. System Configuration Messages

Table 9 below provides the System configuration messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 9

System configuration			
40	Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
	RSI - Request system information		
	NSI - Notify system information (response to RSI)	0x01	Protocol version implemented (initially, set to 0).
		0x02	System ID
		0x03	System type
		0x04	Maximum number of modules (cards) on the system (whether present or not).
		0x05	Bay number.
50			This message is sent as a response to a RSI request.
	RBN - Request bay number		
	NBN - Response to RBN	0x05	Bay number
55			This message is sent as a response to a RBN request.
	SBN - Set bay number	0x05	Bay number
	ASBN -	0x05	Bay number
60	Acknowledgment to SBN		This message is sent as a response to a SBN request.

d. Telco Interface Configuration Messages

Table 10 below provides the Telco interface configuration messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 10

Telco interface configuration		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RMI - Request module information	0x07	Module number
NMI - Notify module information (response to RMI)	0x07	Module number
	0x0A	<u>Module type:</u>
	0x00	not present
	0x01	unknown
	0x03	router card
	0x04	8-line channelized T1
	0x06	48-modem card
	0x07	HDLC card
	0x08	Ethernet card
	0x09	Serial WAN card
	0x0A	HSSI card
	0x0B	10-line unchannelized T1
	0x0D	T3
	0x0E	48-modem 56K card
	0x10	SDSL
	0x11	ADSL CAP
	0x12	ADSL DMT
	0x13	standalone modem controller
	0x14	32-line IDSL
	0x0B	Many other values are reserved.
	0x0B	Capabilities/features: logical OR of any of the following flags:
	0x01	Capable of continuity testing
	0x02	Network interface module
	0x08	Number of lines (or items, depending on card type).
	0x09	External name (i.e., "8l-card", etc.) in ASCII format.
	0x07	Module number
RLI - Request line information	0x0D	Line number
NLI - Notify line information (response to RLI)	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x0E	Number of channels
	0x0F	External name in ASCII format
	0x10	Line coding:
	0x00	Unknown
	0x01	AMI D4 AMI
	0x02	B8ZS ESF - B8ZS
	0x11	<u>Framing:</u>
	0x00	Unknown
	0x01	D4
	0x02	ESF
	0x12	<u>Signaling type:</u>
	0x00	Unknown
	0x01	In-band
	0x02	ISDN PRI
	0x03	NFAS
	0x04	SS7 gateway
	0x13	<u>In-band signaling details:</u>
	0x00	Unknown
	0x01	Wink start
	0x02	Idle start
	0x03	wink-wink with 200 msec wink
	0x04	wink-wink with 400 msec wink
	0x05	loop start CPE
	0x06	ground start CPE
	0x41	<u>T1 front-end type:</u>
	0x00	Unknown
	0x01	CSU (T1 long haul)
	0x02	DSX-1 (T1 short haul)
	65	

TABLE 10-continued

Telco interface configuration		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
	0x42	<u>T1 CSU build-out:</u>
	0x00	0 db
	0x01	7.5 db
	0x02	15 db
	0x03	22.5 db
	0x43	<u>T1 DSX-1 line length:</u>
	0x00	1-133 ft
	0x01	134-266 ft
	0x02	267-399 ft
	0x03	400-533 ft
	0x04	534-655 ft
RCI - Request Channel information	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
NCI - Notify channel information (response to RCI)	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x16	Channel status
	0x17	Bearer Capability of the Channel (BCC) or type of the active call, when call is present.
	0x18	Calling Party number
	0x19	Dialed Phone number
	0x1A	Timestamp of the last channel status transition
	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x0F	External name in ASCII format
	0x10	<u>Line coding:</u>
	0x01	AMI
	0x02	B8ZS
	0x11	<u>Framing:</u>
	0x01	D4
	0x02	ESF
	0x12	<u>Signaling type:</u>
	0x01	In-band
	0x02	ISDN PRI
	0x03	NFAS
	0x04	SS7 gateway
	0x13	<u>In-band signaling details:</u>
	0x01	Wink start
	0x02	Idle start
	0x03	wink-wink with 200 msec wink
	0x04	wink-wink with 400 msec wink
	0x05	loop start CPE
	0x06	ground start CPE
	0x41	<u>T1 front-end type:</u>
	0x01	CSU (T1 long haul)
	0x02	DSX-1 (T1 short haul)
	0x42	<u>T1 CSU build-out:</u>
	0x00	0 db
	0x01	7.5 db
	0x02	15 db
	0x03	22.5 db

TABLE 10-continued

Telco interface configuration		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
	0x43	T1 DSX-1 line length: 0x00 1-133 ft 0x01 134-266 ft 0x02 267-399 ft 0x03 400-533 ft 0x04 534-655 ft
ASLI - New line information ACK	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
This message is sent as a response to a SLI request.		

e. Gateway Configuration Messages

Table 11 below provides the Gateway configuration messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 11

Gateway configuration		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RGWI - Request Gateway information	0x1B	IP Address for Primary gateway
RGWI - Notify Gateway information	0x1C	TCP port for Primary gateway
	0x1D	IP Address for Secondary gateway
	0x1E	TCP port for Secondary gateway
This message is sent as a response to a RGWI request, or when the local NAS configuration is changed by other means.		
SGWI - Set Gateway information	0x02	Serial Number of Remote Unit
	0x1B	New IP Address of Primary gateway
	0x1C	TCP port for Primary gateway
	0x1D	New IP Address of Secondary gateway
	0x1E	TCP port for Secondary gateway
ASGWI - Acknowledge to SGWI		
This message is sent as a response to a SGWI request.		
RGWS - Request Gateway status	0x02	Serial Number of Remote Unit
NGWS - Notify Gateway status	0x02	Serial Number of Remote Unit
	0x1B	New IP Address of Primary Host
	0x1C	TCP port for Primary
	0x1D	New IP Address of Secondary Host
	0x1E	TCP port for Secondary
	0x1F	Gateway in use (Primary/Secondary)
This message is sent as a response to a RGWS request.		

f. Maintenance-Status (State) Messages

Table 12 below provides the Maintenance-Status (State) messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 12

Maintenance - Status (State)		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RMS - Request module status	0x07	Module number
This message will force an immediate NMS.		
RLS - Request line status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
This message will force an immediate NLS.		
RCS - Request channel status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
This message will force an immediate NCS.		
NMS - Notify module status	0x07	Module number
	0x0A	Module type (see NMI above)
	0x0C	Module status
	0x20	Number of lines (for network interface modules only)
	0x21	Line status: one entry per line (for network interface modules only)
This message should be issued by the NAS any time that the module status changes or if a RMS command was received.		
NLS - Notify line status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x14	Line status
	0x22	Number of channels
	0x23	Channel status: one entry per channel
This message should be issued by the NAS any time that the line status changes or if a RLS command was received.		
NCS - Notify channel status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x16	Channel status
This message should be issued by the NAS if an RCS command was received.		
SMS - Set a module to a given status	0x07	Module number
	0x24	Requested state:
	0x00	out of service
	0x01	initialize (bring up)
As the Module changes status, the NAS will notify the GW with NMS messages. The correlator in those NMS messages will not be the same as the correlator in the SMS message.		
SLS - Set a line to a given status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x25	Requested state:
	0x00	Disable
	0x01	Enable
	0x02	Start loopback
	0x03	Terminate loopback
As the line changes status, the NAS will notify the GW with NLS messages. The correlator in those NLS messages will not be the same as the correlator in the SLS message.		
SCS - Set a group of channels to a given status	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x28	Start Channel number
	0x29	End Channel number
	0x26	Action:
	0x00	Reset to idle
	0x01	Reset to out of service
	0x02	Start loopback
	0x03	Terminate loopback
	0x04	Block
	0x05	Unblock

TABLE 12-continued

Maintenance - Status (State)		
	0x27	Option:
	0x00	Do not perform the indicated action if any of the channels is not in the valid initial state.
	0x01	Perform the indicated action on channels which are on the valid initial state. Other channels are not affected.
Action	Valid initial state	Final state
Reset to idle	maintenance, idle blocked, loopback, idle, in use, connected	
Reset to out of service	maintenance, out of service blocked, loopback, idle, in use, connected	
Start loopback	idle	loopback
End loopback	loopback	idle
Block	idle	blocked
Unblock	blocked	idle
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
NSCS - Response to SCS	0x07 0x0D 0x28 0x29 0x2A	Module number Line number Start Channel number End Channel number Response code:
	0x00 0x01	action successfully performed in all channels at least one channel failed
	0x22 0x23	Number of channels Channel status: one entry per channel

g. Continuity Test Messages

Table 13 below provides the Continuity test messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 13

Continuity test		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
PCT - Prepare channel for continuity test	0x07 0x0D 0x15	Module number Line number Channel number
APCT - Response to PCT request	0x07 0x0D 0x15 0x2B	Module number Line number Channel number Result:
	0x00 0x01	Resources reserved successfully Resource not available
SCT - Start continuity test procedure with far	0x07 0x0D	Module number Line number

TABLE 13-continued

Continuity test			
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description	
PCT - Prepare channel for continuity test	0x07 0x0D 0x15	Module number Line number Channel number	
APCT - Response to PCT request	0x07 0x0D 0x15 0x2B	Module number Line number Channel number Result:	
	0x00 0x01	Timeout in milliseconds. Default is 2 seconds.	
SCT - Start continuity test procedure with far		The SCT command must be received less than 3 seconds after the APCT was sent. The continuity test performed by the NAS is as follows:	
	1	Start tone detection	
	2	Generate a check tone	
	3	Start timer	
	4	When tone is detected (minimum of 60 ms):	
	4.1	Stop timer.	
	4.2	Stop generator	
	4.2.1	TEST SUCCESSFUL	
	5	If timer expires:	
	5.1	Stop generator	
	5.2	TEST FAILED	
	25	After continuity testing, a channel is always left in the idle state.	
	ASCT - Continuity test result	0x07 0x0D 0x15 0x2D	Module number Line Number Channel Number Result:
	30	0x00 Test completed successfully 0x01 Test failed	

h. Keepalive Test Messages

Table 14 below provides the Keepalive test messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 14

Keepalive test		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RTE - Request test echo	0x2E	Random characters
ARTE - Response to RTE	0x2E	Same random characters from RTE
	45	

i. LAN Test Messages

Table 15 below provides the LAN test messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 15

LAN test		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RTP - Request a test ping	0x02 0x2F 0x30	System ID IP Address to Ping Number of pings to send
ATP - Response to RTP	0x02 0x2F 0x30	System ID IP Address to Ping Number of successful pings
	60	

j. DTMF Function Messages

Table 16 below provides the DTMF function messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 16

<u>DTMF functions</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
LTN - Listen for DTMF tones	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x31	Time to wait for a tone (since either last tone heard or start of command) - in milliseconds
	0x32	Maximum number of tones to recognize
	0x34	Tone to cancel the wait
If resources are available, the NAS starts listening for DTMF tones on the given channel. The procedure is as follows:		
1.		Starts timer.
2.		When a tone is recognized:
2.1.		Restart timer.
2.2.		If the recognized tone is the 'tone to cancel', the operation is concluded and a response is generated (cancel tone received).
2.3.		Add the tone to the response string. If the number of tones on the string exceeds the maximum allowed, the operation is concluded and a response is generated (max tones received).
2.4.		When the tone is removed, restart the timer and continue from step 2.
2.5.		If the timer expires, the operation is concluded and a response is generated (tone too long).
3.		If the timer expires, the operation is concluded and a response is generated (timeout).
ALTN - Response to LTN	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x35	Completion status:
	0x00	Timeout
	0x01	No resources available for this operation
	0x02	Operation was interrupted
	0x03	Cancel tone received
	0x04	Maximum tones received
	0x05	Tone too long
	0x32	Number of tones received
	0x33	String of tones received (ASCII characters '0'-'9', '*', '#')
STN - Send DTMF tones	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x32	Number of tones to send
	0x33	String of Tones to send (ASCII characters '0'-'9', '*', '#', 'd' - contiguous diaitone, 'b' - contiguous user busy, 'n' - contiguous network busy, 's' - short pause, 'r' - contiguous ring-back)
ASTN - Completion result of STN command	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x36	Completion status:
	0x00	Operation succeeded
	0x01	Operation failed
	0x02	Operation was interrupted

k. Inbound Call Handling Messages

Table 17 below provides the Inbound call handling messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 17

<u>Inbound call handling</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RCSI - Request inbound call setup	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x17	Bearer Capability of the Channel (BCC) required for the call.
	0x19	Called Phone number
	0x18	Calling Party number
This message is a notification from the GW to the NAS that an inbound call is pending. The NAS should respond with an ACSI message indicating if it accepts or with an ACR if it rejects the call.		
15		
The valid channel states for this command are idle or loopback. If the channel is in loopback state, loopback mode is ended and the call proceeds.		
ACSI - Accept inbound call setup	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
20		
This message is a notification from the NAS to the GW that an inbound call has been accepted. Appropriate resources have been reserved at the NAS for this call.		
CONI - Connect inbound call (answer)	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x40	Call identifier assigned by the NAS
25		
This message is an indication from the NAS to the GW to answer an inbound call.		

30. 1. Outbound Call Handling Messages

Table 18 below provides the Outbound call handling messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

35

<u>Outbound call handling</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RCSO - Request outbound call setup	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x17	Bearer Capability of the Channel (BCC) required for the call.
	0x19	Called Phone number ¹
	0x18	Calling Party number ¹
	0x37	Destination module ²
	0x38	Destination line ²
	0x39	Destination channel ²
50	0x40	Call identifier assigned by the NAS ³
If the call is initiated by the NAS, the Module, Line and Channel numbers are set to 0, because it is up to the GW to assign an appropriate channel for the outgoing call.		
55		
If the call is initiated by the GW, the Module, Line and Channel numbers indicate the channel that should be connected to the outbound call. The NAS will place a call in one of its regular trunks (such as an ISDN PRI line). The GW or the NAS will respond with a ACSO (if the call was accepted) or with a RCR (if the call was rejected). When the outbound call is established, it will be connected to the channel specified by the tags 0x07/0x0D/0x15.		
60		
ACSO - Accept outbound call setup	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel Number
If the call was initiated by the NAS, this is a notification from the GW that an outbound call was accepted and it is pending. The Gateway should send an RCR message if it wants to reject a call.		
65		
If the call was initiated by the GW, this is a notification from the NAS that an outbound call was accepted and it is pending. The NAS would have sent an RCR message if it wanted to reject a call.		

TABLE 18-continued

<u>Outbound call handling</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
CONO - Outbound call connected	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0x40	Call identifier assigned by the NAS. ⁴
This message is a notification from the GW to the NAS that an outbound call has been connected.		

¹Optional - can be omitted. When RCSO is initiated by the Gateway, either this tag or complete address of the TDM destination channel must be present for the NAS to establish a call.

²Optional. Meaningful only for outbound calls initiated by the Gateway. If the address of a TDM destination channel is present, the specified channel will be used to setup the outbound part of the call.

³Present only when RCSO is originated by the NAS.

⁴Present only if this call was initiated by the Gateway.

m. Pass-through Call Handling Messages

Table 19 below provides the Pass-through call handling messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 19

<u>Pass-through call handling</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RCST - Request pass-through call setup (TDM connection between two channels)	0x07	From Module number
	0x0D	From Line number
	0x15	From Channel number
	0x17	Bearer Capability of the Channel (BCC) required for the call.
	0x37	To Module number
	0x38	To Line number
	0x39	To Channel number
	This message is a request from the GW to the NAS to link two channels. The NAS should respond with an ACST if it accepts the connection or with a RCR if it rejects the connection.	
	The indicated channels are interconnected at the time slot level. The NAS will not perform any rate adaptation. It is the Gateway's responsibility to specify compatible channels.	
	The indicated channels are interconnected at the time slot level. The NAS will not perform any rate adaptation. It is the Gateway's responsibility to specify compatible channels.	
ACST - Accept pass-through call	0x07	From Module number
	0x0D	From Line number
	0x15	From Channel number
	0x37	To Module number
	0x38	To Line number
	0x39	To Channel number
This message is a notification from the NAS to the GW that a TDM connection has been accepted and connected. The two indicated channels are now connected.		

n. Call Clearing Messages

Table 20 below provides the Call clearing messages, the parameter tags and the parameter descriptions (associated with these messages).

TABLE 20

<u>Call clearing</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
RCR - Release channel request	0x07	Module number
	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0xFE	ISDN cause code

TABLE 20-continued

<u>Call clearing</u>		
Message	Parameter Tag	Parameter Description
In the case of a pass-through call (TDM connection), the channel identified should be the 'from' side.	0x07	Module number
ACR - Release channel completed	0x0D	Line number
	0x15	Channel number
	0xFE	ISDN cause code

6. Control Message Parameters

Table 21 below provides a listing of the control message parameters, and the control messages which use these message parameters. More specifically, Table 21 provides the tags associated with the parameters, the size (in bytes) of the parameters, the type of the parameters (e.g., ASCII), the parameter descriptions, and the control messages which use the parameters.

TABLE 21

25	Size (bytes)	Type	Parameter description	Usage
30	0x00	0	End marker	All messages.
	0x01	1	Protocol version	NSUP
	0x02	1 to 24	System ID/Serial Number	NUS, ASUP, NSDN, RST1, ARST1, RST2, ARST2, NSI, SGWI, RGWS, NGWS
	0x03	9	System type	NSUP, NSI
	0x04	2	Max. number of modules (slot cards) supported	NSUP, NSI
	0x05	8	Bay number	NSUP, NSI, NBN
	0x06	1	Reboot	ARST2
	0x07	2	acknowledgment	
	0x08	2	Module number	RMI, NMI, RLI, NLI, RCI, NCI, SLI, ASLI, RMS, RLS, RCS, NMS, NLS, NCS, SMS, SLS, SCS, NSCS, PCT, APCT, SCT, ASCT, LTN, ALTN, STN, ASTN, RCSI, ACSI, CONI, RCSO, ACSO, CONO, RCST, ACST, RCR, ACR, NMI, NMS
	0x09	16	Number of lines on this module	
40	0x0A	1	Module name	NMI
	0x0B	1	Module type	NMI
	0x0C	1	Module capabilities	NMI
	0x0D	2	Module status	NMS
	0x0E	2	Line number	RLI, NLI, RCI, NCI, SLI, ASLI, RLS, RCS, NLS, NCS, SLS, SCS, NSCS, PCT, APCT, SCT, ASCT, LTN, ALTN, STN, ASTN, RCSI, ACSI, CONI, RCSO, ACSO, CONO, RCST, ACST, RCR, ACR, NLI, NLS
	0x0F	16	Line name	NLI, SLI
	0x10	1	Line coding	NLI, SLI
	0x11	1	Line framing	NLI, SLI

TABLE 21-continued

Tag	Size (bytes)	Type	Parameter description	Usage	5
0x12	1		Line signaling details	NLI, SLI	
0x13	1		Line in-band signaling details	NLI, SLI	
0x14	1	Line Status	Line status	NLS	
0x15	2	UINT	Channel number	RCI, NCI, RCS, NCS, SCS, NSCS, PCT, APCT, SCT, ASCT, LTN, ALTN, STN, ASTN, RCSI, ACSI, CONI, RCSO, ACSI, CONO, RCST, ACST, RCR, ACR	10
0x16	1	Channel Status	Channel status	NCS	
0x17	1		Bearer capability	NCI, RCSI, RCSO, RCST	20
0x18	24	ASCII	Calling party number	NCL, RCSI, RCSO	
0x19	24	ASCII	Dialed number	NCL, RCSI, RCSO	
0x1A	4	TIME	Channel status change timestamp	NCI	
0x1B	4	Ipaddr	Primary Gateway IP	NGWI, SGWI, NGWS	25
0x1C	2	UINT	Primary Gateway TCP port	NGWI, SGWI, NGWS	
0x1D	4	Ipaddr	Secondary Gateway IP	NGWI, SGWI, NGWS	
0x1E	2	UINT	Secondary Gateway TCP port	NGWI, SGWI, NGWS	30
0x1F	1		Gateway selector	NGWS	
0x20	2	UINT	Number of lines in the Line status array	NMS	
0x21	Variable	Line Status	Line status array	NMS	
0x22	2	UINT	Number of channels in the Channel status array	NLS	
0x23	Variable	Channel Status	Channel status array	NLS	
0x24	1		Requested module state	SMS	
0x25	1		Requested line state	SLS	
0x26	1		Requested channel status	SCS	
0x27	1		Set channel status option	SCS	
0x28	2	UINT	Channel number first (for grouping)	SCS, NSCS	
0x29	2	UINT	Channel number last (for grouping)	SCS, NSCS	
0x2A	1		"Set channel status" result	NSCS	
0x2B	1		"Prepare for continuity check" result	APCT	
0x2C	2	UINT	Continuity timeout	SCT	
0x2D	1		Continuity test result	ASCT	
0x2E	0 to 16		Test echo	RTB, ARTE	
0x2F	4	Ipaddr	Test ping address	RTP, ATP	
0x30	2	UINT	Test ping: Number of packets	RTP, ATP	

TABLE 21-continued

Tag	Size (bytes)	Type	Parameter description	Usage
0x31	2	UINT	DTMF listen time	LTN
0x32	1	UINT	DTMF number of tones	LTN, ALTN, STN
0x33	Variable	ASCII	DTMF string ('0'-'9', 'A'-'D', '*', '#')	ALTN, STN
0x34	1	BYTE	DTMF tone to cancel the waiting	LTN
0x35	1		DTMF listen completion status	ALTN
0x36	1		DTMF send completion status	STN
0x37	2	UINT	TDM destination Module	RCST, ACST, RCSO (gw)
0x38	2	UINT	TDM destination Line	RCST, ACST, RCSO (gw)
0x39	2	UINT	TDM destination channel	RCST, ACST, RCSO (gw)
0x40	2	UINT	Call identifier (RAS's Route ID)	COM, CONO, RCSO (nas)
0x41	1	BYTE	T1 front-end type	SLI, NLI
0x42	1	BYTE	T1 CSU build-out	SLI, NLI
0x43	1	BYTE	T1 DSX line length	SLI, NLI
0xFE	1	UINT	ISDN cause code	RCR, ACR, others

7. A Detailed View of the Control Messages

The following section provides a detailed view of the flow of control messages between GW 508 and NAS bay 902. Included are the source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments describing the message flow.

a. Startup Flow

Table 22 below provides the Startup flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 22

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
45	1	NSUP	NAS coming up. The message contains server information, including number of modules in the system.
	2	ASUP	

b. Module Status Notification

Table 23 below provides the Module status notification flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 23

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1			NMS Notify module status.
2			If the module is in the UP state:
3	RMI		Request module information
4		NMI	Notify module information (including number of lines in this module).

c. Line Status Notification Flow

Table 24 below provides the Line status notification flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 24

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1		NLS	Notify line status.
2			If the line is in the UP state:
3	RLI		Request line information
4		NLI	Notify line information (including number of channels).

Note: Channels will remain in the out-of-service state until the line becomes available. At that time, the channels will be set to the idle state. The Gateway must then explicitly disable or block channels that should not be in the idle state.

d. Blocking of Channels Flow

Table 25 below provides the Blocking of channels flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 25

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	SCS		Set a group of channels to be blocked state.
2	RSCS		Message indicates if the operation was successful or if it failed.

e. Unblocking of Channels Flow

Table 26 below provides the Unblocking of channels flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 26

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	SCS		Set a group of channels to be unblocked state.
2	RSCS		Message indicates if the operation was successful or if it failed.

f. Inbound Call Flow (Without Loopback Continuity Testing)

Table 27 below provides the Inbound call flow (without loopback continuity testing), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 27

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	RCSI		Setup for inbound call on given module/line/channel
2		ACSI	Accept inbound call. At this time, the NAS may start any Radius lookup, etc.
3		CONI	Connect (answer) inbound call.

g. Inbound Call Flow (With Loopback Continuity Testing)

Table 28 below provides the Inbound call flow (without loopback continuity testing), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 28

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
5	1	SCS	Set a channel to the loopback state.
	2	RSCS	Message indicates if the operation was successful or if it failed.
	3	RCSI	If the gateway determines that the test was successful:
	3.1		Setup for inbound call on given module/line/channel.
10	3.2	ACSI	Accept/Reject inbound call. At this time, the NAS may start any Radius lookup, etc.
	3.3	CONI	Connect (answer) inbound call.
4	If the gateway determines that the test was not successful:		
4.1	SCS		Release a channel from the loopback state (back to idle state)
15	4.2	RSCS	Message indicates if the operation was successful or if it failed.

h. Outbound Call Flow (Starting from the NAS)

Table 29 below provides the Outbound call flow (starting from the NAS), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 29

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	RCSO		Request outbound call. Note that the NAS doesn't know yet what module/line/channel will be used for the call and so, they are set to 0.
2	ACSO		Accept/Reject outbound call on module/line/channel. This message is used by the Gateway to notify the NAS which module/line/channel will be used for the call. If the NAS can't process the call on that channel, it should issue a Release command.
3	CONO		Outbound call answered by called party.

i. Outbound Call Flow (Starting from the GW)

Table 30 below provides the Outbound call flow (starting from the GW), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 30

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	RCSO		Request outbound call. The Gateway indicates the channel that should be connected to the outbound call.
2	ACSO		Accept/Reject outbound call on module/line/channel. The NAS will place the call using one of the interfaces (such as an ISDN PRI line).
3	CONO		Outbound call answered by called party. The pass-through connection is established.

j. Outbound Call Flow (Starting from the NAS, with Continuity Testing)

Table 31 below provides the Outbound call flow (starting from the NAS, with continuity testing), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 31

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1		RCSO	Request outbound call. Note that the NAS doesn't know yet what module/line/channel will be used for the call and so, they are set to 0.
2		RPCT	The Gateway requests a continuity test:
2.1		RPCT	Prepare for Continuity test
2.2		APCT	Accept continuity test
2.3		SCT	Start continuity test. If the NAS doesn't receive this command within 3 seconds of sending an APCT, the continuity test will be canceled and all reserved resources will be released.
2.4		ASCT	Continuity test result.
3		ACSO	Accept outbound call on module/line/channel. This message is used by the Gateway to notify the NAS which module, line and channel will be used for the call. If the NAS can't process the call on that channel, it should issue a Release command.
4		CONO	Outbound call answered by called party.

k. TDM Pass-through Call Request Flow (Inter-switch Connection)

Table 32 below provides the TDM pass-through call request flow (inter-switch connection), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 32

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	RCST		Gateway requests a given pair of module/line/channel to be interconnected for inter-trunk switching.
2		ACST	Accept/Reject inter-trunk switch connection.

I. Call Releasing Flow (from NAS)

Table 33 below provides the Call releasing flow (from NAS), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 33

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1		RCR	NAS needs to release a call (for example, it received an LCP TRMREQ).
2		ACR	When Gateway completes the release, it notifies the NAS.

m. Call Releasing Flow (from GW)

Table 34 below provides the call releasing flow (from GW), including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 34

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1		RCR	Gateway requests to release a call (for example, the remote end hung up).
2		ACR	When the NAS completes the release, it notifies the Gateway.

n. Complex Outbound Call Request Flow Example

Table 35 below provides an Complex outbound call request flow example, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant

comments. The reader is referred to FIG. 12 for an illustration and state flow diagrams 18A and 18B.

TABLE 35

Step	From	To	Message	Comments
5	NAS#1	GW	RCSO	NAS#1 requests an outbound call. Gateway determines that the best route to destination is through a PRI line on NAS#3. To get there, it will use NAS#2 as a switch point. The Gateway selects channel 1/2/3 on NAS#1 for this call.
	GW	NAS#2	RCST	Gateway asks NAS#2 to establish a TDM connection between channel 2/3/3 and channel 4/5/6.
10	NAS#2	GW	ACST	NAS#2 accepts and connects the connection.
	GW	NAS#3	RCSO	Gateway asks NAS#3 to place a call to the destination and connect it to the channel 6/7/6.
15	NAS#3	GW	ACSO	NAS#3 accepts the outbound connection and starts setting up the outbound call on PRI #1.
	GW	NAS#1	ACSO	Gateway tells NAS#1 that the call is proceeding.
20	NAS#3	GW	CONO	NAS#3 reports the outbound call has been connected.
	GW	NAS#1	CONO	The call has been connected.

o. Continuity Test Flow

Table 36 below provides the Continuity test flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 36

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
40	1	RPCT	Prepare for continuity test.
	2	APCT	Accept continuity test.
	3	SCT	Start continuity test. If the NAS doesn't receive this command within 3 seconds of sending an APCT, the continuity test will be canceled and all reserved resources will be released.
45	4	ASCT	Continuity test result.

p. Keep-alive Test Flow

Table 37 below provides the Keep-alive test flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 37

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
60	1		RTE Response test echo is sent.
	2	ARTE	A response to test echo is sent.

q. Reset Request Flow

Table 38 below provides the Reset request flow, including the step, the control message source (either GW 508 or NAS bay 902) and relevant comments.

TABLE 38

Step	Gateway	NAS	Comments
1	RST1		First step.
2		ARST1	
3	RST2		Second step. If the NAS doesn't receive this command within 5 seconds of sending an ARST1, it will not reboot.
4		ARST2	The NAS starts the reboot procedure.
5		NSDN	NAS is now rebooting.

V. Conclusion

While various embodiments of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for bypassing one or more public switched telephone network (PSTN) facility switches, the system comprising:

(i) means for receiving signaling messages from a telecommunications carrier;

(ii) a network access server for receiving and terminating data calls, wherein said network access server extends a first network to a second network by establishing a protocol tunnel for said data calls; and

(iii) a control server for communicating with said means for receiving signaling messages, for accessing a database according to a called number to distinguish between voice calls and said data calls received from said telecommunications carrier, and for sending said data calls to said network access server according to an open architecture protocol.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said first network is a virtual private network and said second network is a data network.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein said tunnel is established using a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP).

4. A system for bypassing one or more public switched telephone network (PSTN) facility switches, the system comprising:

(i) means for receiving signaling messages from a telecommunications carrier;

(ii) a network access server for receiving and terminating data calls, wherein said network access server converts said data calls from a first digitized format into a second digitized format for delivery of said data calls to a destination data network; and

(iii) a control server for communicating with said means for receiving signaling messages, for accessing a database according to a called number to distinguish between voice calls and said data calls received from said telecommunications carrier, and for sending said data calls to said network access server according to an open architecture protocol.

5. The system according to claim 4, wherein said network access server comprises a first device for terminating said data calls on at least one modem.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein said first device comprises a modem network access server bay.

7. The system according to claim 4, wherein said first digitized format comprises one of:

5 a serial line interface protocol (SLIP) protocol format; and a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format.

8. The system according to claim 4, wherein said second digitized format comprises one of:

10 a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format;

a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format;

an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell packet format; a point-to-point tunneling protocol (PPTP) protocol format;

a NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI) protocol format;

an AppleTalk protocol format;

a routing table protocol (RTP) Banyan VINES format;

A DECNet format;

a Netware internet packet exchange (IPX) protocol format; and

an internet control message protocol (ICMP) protocol format.

9. A method for bypassing data from one or more public switched telephone network (PSTN) facility switches, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a call from a telecommunications carrier having an open architecture telecommunications system; using a telephone number of a called party to determine whether said call is a voice call or a data call; and terminating said call onto a network access server for termination processing, if said call is a data call, wherein said terminating step comprises converting said call from a first protocol to a second protocol.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein said first protocol comprises one of:

a serial line interface protocol (SLIP) protocol format; and a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format.

11. The method according to claim 9, wherein said second protocol comprises one of:

a transmission control program, internet protocol (TCP/IP) packet format;

a user datagram protocol, internet protocol (UDP/IP) packet format;

an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell packet format;

a serial line interface protocol (SLIP) protocol format;

a point-to-point (PPP) protocol format;

a NETBIOS extended user interface (NETBEUI) protocol format;

an AppleTalk protocol format;

a routing table protocol (RTP) Banyan VINES format;

A DECNet format;

a Netware internet packet exchange (IPX) protocol format; and

an internet control message protocol (ICMP) protocol format.

* * * * *